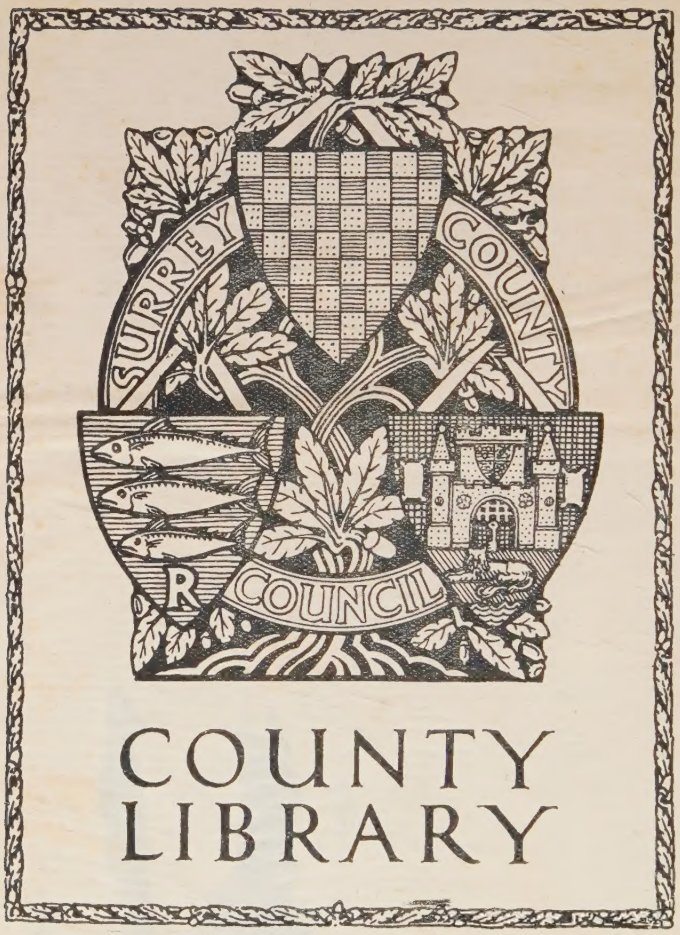

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GATHERED LEAVES

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Mary Coleridge
at the age of 22.

GATHERED LEAVES

FROM THE PROSE OF

MARY E. COLERIDGE

WITH A MEMOIR BY

EDITH SICHEL

'Light was your touch upon the shadowy earth;
You loved it well, yet knew it little worth;
Each mood you loved that changing nature brings,
And yet, and yet—you loved diviner things.'

BERNARD HOLLAND.

LONDON
CONSTABLE AND COMPANY
10 ORANGE STREET, LEICESTER SQUARE
1910

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TO

MARY'S FRIENDS

AND MINE

PREFATORY NOTE

I SHOULD like to acknowledge with gratitude the kindness of the Editors of the *Cornhill Magazine* and the *Times*, and that of Sir Herbert Stephen, in allowing me to reprint contributions (stories, essays, and passages from articles) from the *Cornhill*, the *Literary Supplement* of the *Times*, and from the *Reflector*, which is now out of print. In the case of other extinct periodicals I have done my best to get permission to reproduce contributions, and, in the cases in which I got no response, I have taken for granted that I can give no offence by republication. It has seemed best to arrange the contents of the volume in chronological order, for the sake of those who like to follow the growth of the author's mind and character.

EDITH SICHEL.

Feb. 7th, 1910.

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MARY COLERIDGE

For most people there is a beginning and an end. It is important to recall that they were born, and that they died at such and such a date. But to say of Mary Coleridge that she was born in September 1861, that she lived nearly forty-six years, and died in August 1907, means little. She was never of any age, and excepting that as life went on she grew and ripened, she was much the same at twenty as at forty. She seemed to belong to eternity rather than to time, and the years had hardly power to touch her. Her nature was woven of many complex threads, seeming to cross each other, yet forming a fine, close tissue. She was all poet, and three-quarters saint; she was holy, without the faintest tinge of puritanism; she was merry, without injury to her holiness. The background of her spirit was pensive, rather shrinking, often sad; but she delighted in gaiety and generally made a gay impression, because she possessed the rare gift of being in love with the moment, and was easily amused by things and people. Fantastic she was to excess, and there were hours when she let her fancies, light as thistle-

down, take her anywhere so long as she need not tread on solid earth. And yet she could be shrewd and sober of judgment in a way that surprised even her intimates.

It might be thought that such opposite elements would have given either a broken, or a bewildering impression. But that was not so. The impression left by Mary Coleridge was one of unity. All her various, sometimes paradoxical qualities were covered, linked together, by her unique force of loving. It lent colour to all her faculties; it caught colour from them. Her fancy was a loving fancy; her loves were often fantastic. Rich and poor, the stupid and the intellectual, children and old people, all sorts and conditions, had they been asked what she was like, would have differed on many points, but in this they would have been agreed—that the chief feeling conveyed by her presence was the sense of this power of love. It was essentially love for the individual. Any classing or massing she rejected; it almost irritated her. She disliked philanthropy, she said she disliked the poor, and yet there were many poor women who counted among her closest friends. In the same way, respect of persons offended her; she took every one solely upon his merits. Intellectual scorn was in her eyes among the cardinal sins, and she was more prone to invest a dull acquaintance with romance than to seek one out because he was brilliant.

As she was always the same from childhood onwards, it has seemed needful—for the sake of those who did not know her—to preface any pages concerning her with some attempt, however inadequate, to catch a fleeting

likeness of her inner nature. For her life, from the outset, was the life of the spirit, her adventures (they were many and romantic), the adventures of the soul. As a child she was delicate and shrinking, the prey of an almost painful sensitiveness. It was only her love for those nearest to her — her father, her mother, her one sister, and an unmarried aunt who lived with them—that could dominate her diffidence. Perhaps this timidity drove her the more quickly into that world which was really her home, the world of the imagination. There she was always bold, even daring, and no one knew that the fair-haired, rather pale-faced little girl who could hardly come into a room without suffering was far away with Harry Hotspur, or dreaming of Sir Gawain and Sir Lancelot, or sailing with Drake to El Dorado.

These first years of life are seldom happy ones to a highly-strung child. For they are the time when reason and imagination—unprotected imagination—run parallel and never meet. Reason was not Mary Coleridge's strong point, and imagination was, so she suffered. In after times she never, she said, 'lived over again' her childhood. 'I was,' she wrote, 'such a numb, unliving child, that all that period of my life is vague and twilight, and I can recall scarcely anything except the sharp sensations of fear that broke the dull dream of my days. So soon as I began to awake to life, my childhood fell away from me.' Books were from the first her consolation. Long before she was in her teens she began to read Shakespeare, to read and *feel* him with a poet's instinct. Her life was changed from that moment. She

learned to know men and women through him years before she knew them through life. Scott, too, enchanted the days of her early girlhood. She was one of the leading spirits among a circle of eager children, who met together every Saturday to act the Waverley novels. Those who saw her will never forget her in the part of Ivanhoe, tall, pale, lanky, reed-like, her fair hair tucked beneath her helmet, a dish-cover for shield in her hand, swaying as she charged the Templar, who, robed in a nightgown adorned with a red tape cross, parried her blows with the rest of the dining-room plate. When she acted she lost her shyness, though she did not act particularly well. But one of the puzzling inconsistencies of this frail, secluded being was that she was always dramatic in conception, and, from the beginning, loved strong effects in literature and in life—sometimes, in her ardour for romance, even mistaking sensation for drama. She could, however, only act a hero when disguised. And when she was herself again, she returned to the region familiar to her, a pensive place of silvery tints and half-lights and delicate shadows, rather melancholy, but melancholy from presentiment more than from experience. A little poem that she made when she was thirteen years old might almost have been written in an odd moment at any time of her existence. It is called—

A BALLADE OF AUTUMN

Life is passing slowly,
  Death is drawing near,
Life and Death are holy,
  What have we to fear?

Faded leaves are falling,
Birds are on the wing,
All that dies in Autumn
Lives again in Spring.

The quiet and distinction of her gift are as visible here as in her maturer work. There are no striking images, no youthful crudities. Restraint and discretion were her heritage.

What was perhaps more remarkable than her imagination—for many children are imaginative—was her quickly developed power of scholarship. When she was about twelve, the shape of the Hebrew letters attracted her, and she begged her father to teach her the language. By the time she was nineteen she was well versed in it, as well as in German, French, Italian; and a little later she became a keen reader of Greek. She was not one of those literary scholars who make only for a general impression, for colour more than for form. She was the most careful of students, allowing no detail to be neglected, accurate and reverentially cautious, with a real love for the niceties of learning.

In this path a great influence was soon brought to bear upon her. When she was thirteen, she came into contact with her father's friend, William Johnson, better known as William Cory, the author of *Ionica*, a poet and scholar of no common order. The Coleridges were spending the summer with him at Halsdon, near Torrington, in Devonshire; William Cory easily detected the rare gifts in his friend's little daughter, and as easily knew how to draw them out. Mary's shyness melted

before him, and there were morning assignations in the garden, before breakfast, while the birds and flowers were their sole company. To the end she loved cyclamen and irises, because they were favourites of his. Soon he became her guide in reading, in the marshalling of knowledge, and thus it was that she formed the friendship which perhaps most coloured her intellectual life—the friendship of which she has left the record now printed among these pages. He had awakened in her a longing to know, which spread itself out in all directions.

She began studying for herself, she steeped herself in poetry, in history. She was always an ardent partisan. A contemporary of those years remembers an expedition with her and some other girls to Westminster Abbey to see the waxen figures of the kings and queens there. Historical discussion waxed hot. Mary Coleridge was full of Charles I. Impartiality was a crime in her eyes, and there was no more loyal hater of Cromwell than she was. She asked her comrade on which side she stood. 'Neither,' replied the stolid philosopher of fifteen—'I think there was a bit of truth on both sides.' 'And it made me dislike you for months,' Mary Coleridge said thirty years afterwards.

The same combatants had another pitched battle over Shelley. At seventeen, Mary could not endure him—at twenty-seven, she adored him. In these earlier days her friend was his votary and talked of nothing but *Prometheus Unbound*; but Mary's tender conscience was offended by his lawlessness, her taste bewildered by his dizzy raptures. Ten years later, the two had changed

parts; the friend indicted him for selfish idealism—Mary defended him on the plea of his goodness to his kind.

In those younger years, she not only felt, she began to think. There are three little summaries of different philosophies written by her at sixteen, which show a grasp of mind not common so early in life. Two of them handle Berkeley and Locke; the third, concerning Descartes, is worth giving.

'Cartesian Credo

'I believe that it is possible to doubt of everything; because the evidence of our senses often deceives us (as in sleep, sickness, etc.), but this doubt of my own is the only thing I find doubtless, therefore I conclude that I am a thinking being and that because I think I exist (to doubt being the same as to think). I believe in the immateriality of my soul, because I find that neither place nor any other idea of matter is essential to the thinking part of me; and I believe in God, firstly, because I find in this thinking part of me a very strong and perfect conception of my Creator; and secondly, because it is impossible that something should be produced out of nothing, and I have already found that I am a thinking being, therefore that I am something. I believe also that God is good, because I find in myself inclinations to goodness, and happiness in it, which no evil could have produced, and I believe material things are really so, because if God is good it is at least highly improbable that He would continually deceive me, even for my good. I also conclude that it is wrong

to attempt to define things which can be far more clearly conceived; to these belong doubt, thought, and existence.

'*May 5th*, 1878.'

It was no wonder that all her teachers adored her, and, long after school-days, remembered the essays that she wrote for them. Among those she cared most for was Professor Hales, who lectured on English Literature at King's College for Women. He it was who first set her feet in the fields of Elizabethan drama, and sent her to pasture on the brown folios in the libraries of the South Kensington Museum. To him she owed many golden hours, absorbed in Ford and Webster and Massinger. By herself now, also, she plunged into Homer and Euripides. But here she was not long left alone. When she was three and twenty, her old friend, William Cory, became her master. With him, and with some chosen companions, she read Plato and Theocritus, read, and learned with Greek many other things which she herself has chronicled, such things as left an indelible impression on her mind.

'I should have been well content to read all my life long,' she wrote of this time in a later diary—'With such an appetite did I set out that all books resolved themselves for me into one huge volume, and although blindly conscious even then that I should never live to finish it, I was wild to begin it, not as wise people do, here and there, but everywhere that every one had begun it before me. The fruits of the tree of Knowledge are various; he must be strong indeed who can digest all

of them. I was vainly endeavouring to get my teeth through the sour apple of science, to crack the hard nuts of philosophy, when all that I was really fit for was to gather up the stray blossoms that fell in spring.' . . .

But the sour apple had its uses. The desire for knowledge gradually built up a solid screen between her and her fears. The distresses of childhood had passed away, and youth had begun. Between fifteen and twenty-five she enjoyed many things, although her dread of society continued.

'You would study life to some purpose among all these folks,' she wrote from Homburg in these early days to a friend; 'but things interest me more than people . . . and as I no more understand life than I understand arithmetic (indeed it often seems to me very much like twice one is two, which no one has ever yet made clear to me) I run away from it to the old deserted *Schloss*, with its carved yew-trees and stiff-backed dahlias and sunflowers, and background of soft blue hills and firs and chestnuts. To-night there was a glorious sunset there, and it reminded me of what you said about Nature's gradual changes. Quite true—except as to the moon, and goodness gracious, can't she startle one every now and then, and gleam at one out of boughs in a white passion of rage, just when one least expects it! I don't feel sure of the sun, but there is not the faintest doubt that that moon was once a woman, she is the most human thing in creation. . . . Haven't you sometimes felt inclined to run away anywhere out of reach of those dreadful eyes, with all the

expression frozen out of them? Somebody treated her very badly, depend upon it.'

There is so much of Mary Coleridge's youth in this extract that it tells more about her than any description, and so do the passages that follow:

'After all, what do I know of the world? Beyond the fact that I have lived in it twenty-six years—nothing. I have not even learnt its alphabet. Thirteen years at least out of the twenty-six have I lived in books, and yet I understand them not much better. Dorothea's marriage with Ladislaw is as great a mystery to me as the existence of capital punishment. I have not imagination enough to understand fact, nor experience enough to comprehend fiction. Certain moments in my own life or that of others stand out clearly like mountain tops that have caught the sunrise, while the valley below is still in darkness.'

. . . . . .

'L. is here . . . but she wears such beautiful white frocks, and they fit her so exquisitely, that I feel rather afraid of her when we meet before the Cursaal, and read my Jowett's *Plato* (vol. i.) in a humble background, for fear she should find it out (which she did the very first night).'

. . . . . .

'It's rather funny that you and Ella and I should all be at "the Republic" at the same time; E. wrote ecstatically about it the other day, and she isn't much given to ecstasies by letter. Its extraordinary modernness strikes me, just as it does you. Even Homer and

Shakespeare, who are equally "not of an age, but for all time" with Plato, seem to speak from a distance, but one can hardly persuade oneself that Socrates is not in the next room. And no one but Plato gives one in perfection that absolutely delightful sensation of laughing *not* from amusement, but from sheer happiness, just as a child laughs, because it's alive and the sun shines. I wonder if all laughing began so? I suppose it did. Primitive man didn't understand a joke, very likely.'

. . . . . .

'When I am reading, Conscience comes and says, "You know you ought to be writing. What business have you to enjoy, when you have never worked? What work but this can you do?" When I am talking, ditto. When I am dreaming, just the same. The book I mean to write is sometimes big and sometimes little. The only remarkable thing about it is that it never will identify itself with the book I am actually writing at the moment.'

Somebody said of Mary Coleridge that she was 'like the tail of the comet S.T.C.' 'I have no fairy godmother,' she once wrote, 'but lay claim to a fairy great-great-uncle, which is perhaps the reason that I am condemned to wander restlessly around the Gates of Fairyland, although I have never yet passed them.' All the same, she was well within the magic fence, and the likeness to her great-uncle is no imaginary one. It comes out, perhaps, most in a certain weird quality of her imagination—in the love for the strange and the unearthly—which haunted her from childhood onwards.

'Have you ever read Ye legend of ye Mandrake? I hit on it the other day, and it pleased me mightily. If you want to uproot a mandrake—why you ever should want to uproot it does not appear—you must go to the place where its grows, very early on a Friday morning, taking with you a black dog and having your ears carefully stopped with cotton wool, so that you cannot hear its deathly shriek during the operation. Then you must dig all round it in a square; then you must take a piece of string and fasten one end to the mandrake and the other end to the black dog's tail; then you must run for your life, and the black dog will run after you, dragging the mandrake up along with it. It goes without saying that the black dog dies of the shrieks, but that doesn't matter.'

Coleridge and Wordsworth might have talked enthusiastically of the mandrake on some moonlight evening at Alfoxden—more seriously than their follower, as a possible subject for a poem, and with Coleridge half believing all the time. His great-niece's love of wizardry remained; it took shape in her poems years after: in 'Master and Guest,' and in 'The Witch,' and 'Wilderspin.'

Nearly all her early stories are coloured by this taste, and these stories are many. They were written anywhere and anyhow—chiefly on the backs of old copybooks, for economy's sake. Imagination was plentiful in those days and pocket-money was scarce. But her real ambition at this date was not to be a writer, but a painter, and she worked pretty hard at drawing. Her

delicate, accurate water-colour sketches remain to record her talent. Like all else, they are the expression of herself, more real in this way than as works of art. But no one who saw pictures with her could doubt that an artist was looking, with an artist's power of enjoyment. All her life she had a passion for painting and for talking it over. Yet it was not her true medium; literature was, and she found it out.

She lived at the hour that suited her. 'Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive, but to be young was very heaven.' Perhaps most people could say that of their youth, but for her it was peculiarly true. The late seventies and early eighties were a generous time for the young. Smart criticism and epigrammatic humour had not yet come into fashion; hero-worship was the virtue in vogue, and there still were gods to worship. It was the day of the power of Browning and Tennyson, of Carlyle and Ruskin and George Eliot. Big ideas were moving, fit to kindle the spirit of youth. The once derided Pre-Raphaelites had become a recognised influence. Watts was a reigning force in art. William Morris was inspiring social reforms—a poet's attractive reforms. Furniture, wall-papers, even dress became part of the general ferment. Toynbee Hall was a new venture, and the idea that science was poetic, and that natural law was reconcileable with supernatural power was not as yet the axiom of many pulpits. The rising generation of those days was too busy entering doors to stop and knock at them. Its children may have been extravagant, but they gave themselves, and had no morbid fear of being absurd.

Into all this life and movement Mary Coleridge threw herself. She did so in the company of congenial comrades. They all acknowledged the same gods, and yet their discussions were endless.

Foremost in their talk came the name of Robert Browning. The rest envied Mary, because he went to her parents' house, although she was too shy to speak to him. To the end he was the poet who came first with her. Not that she excluded Tennyson, whose beauty she felt to the full—felt and worshipped. But Browning was an influence in her life; his conceptions of love and death, of faith and unfaith, his conviction that to miss good was worse than to do evil, all this expressed for her her inmost beliefs. Her notes, delicately written on the margin of the volume, make an excellent commentary on *Sordello*; and in her copy of *Pauline* she has given at the sides of the pages every different version of the lines, collected with infinite trouble in the Library of the British Museum. *Paracelsus*, the *Dramatic Lyrics*, *Men and Women*, the plays, she knew from cover to cover. They warmed her with their fire.

And then there were the Pre-Raphaelites. Mary was always their fervent votary. When the Fine Arts first exhibited Mr. Graham's collection of Rossettis, her excitement was intense. Four of that little band of girls still remember the stories they wrote in competition upon the picture, 'How they met Themselves,' and how Mary's eerie tale held them spell-bound. They remember, too, how at other seasons it was the stage that filled their minds—and for them the stage of

those years meant the Lyceum, meant Irving and Ellen Terry.

This was no bad thing for a Shakespeare scholar like Mary, and the papers she wrote then upon the drama show that her powers of criticism became quickened. They were among the first things she published, and came out under a *nom de plume*, in a magazine called *The Theatre*.

Her days were full. Friendship and literature made her happy, friendship at this moment, in particular, for others of her companions pursued art, and one of them had also begun to write. To Mary, her friends' doings were a romance; no one believed in them as she did. In them she lived vicariously. Through them she gained experience, and she enlarged it by her own imagination. Thus existence was idealised for her, although it was not always serene. Like other poets, she continued to have many moods. The sense of beauty which gave her so much joy on good days, was her torment on bad ones.

'It's a dreary day,' she wrote from Broadstairs, 'and I'm self-discontented. When F. is self-discontented, she thinks of Charlotte Brontë, and says sternly to herself, "You fool!" But I don't derive much satisfaction from that form of rebuke. The sea is no colour, the sky is no colour, the houses are uglier than no colour. I have reduced all my possible courses of action in the future to four, and whichever I elect to follow, I am quite sure that the three others immediately seem to be preferable. What a mockery is Free Will under such circumstances! I declare I very nearly wish I had a governess.' . . .

And yet if that day a gleam had shone upon the waters, or if she could have found a green field to sit in, her mood would have changed. She was as changeful as the sea she so adored. No one was more affected by Nature. The wind lashed her, the sunset calmed her, the snow excited her, to the hills she looked for help. She did not wish to 'receive but what she gave'; she liked Nature to be a power outside her, infusing into her the joy, the peace, that she did not always possess. She never felt that power more than in Northumberland. Northumberland haunted her: she loved its stern moods, its summer richness, its Border sights, its strong romance. In the house of her dear Quaker friends, the Hodgkins, where she stayed every year from this time forwards, she learned her Northumberland in the best way. For Dr. Hodgkin, the historian, was her guide, and he made even wayside stones alive with old story. The sea-girt castle of Bamborough, so long the Hodgkins' home, seemed made for her. She delighted to sleep in her turret chamber there, or to pass, as she once did, a memorable night on its tower, watching the moon set and the sun rise over the wide sea. She had other Northumbrian friends, to whom she paid yearly visits. Those to the family of Sir Andrew Noble provided her with some of her best memories, most of all when they lived at Chillingham, another home of her dreams.

Strike, Life, a happy hour, and let me live
But in that grace!
I shall have gathered all the world can give,
Unending Time and Space.

Bright light and air—the thin and shining air
Of the North land,
The light that falls on tower and garden there,
Close to the gold sea-sand.

So begins the second of the three poems that she called 'Chillingham.'

But her visits there were in later years.

She was only twenty-two when sorrow came to her. The aunt died who shared her home, who had been her friend and her counsellor. And the first contact with death—the first shock to the permanence of things—is like none other. It was bound to change her sensitive being, to alter her outlook. And it did so in a strange way. To most young people Death comes as the King of shadows. To her, a dreamer of dreams, Death intensified reality—it made life more concrete, even while it made it more painful. And the next few years were filled with family troubles which left their mark upon her spirit. They were years that went to the making of many of her poems.

Not long after this, Mary Coleridge first read Tolstoy, and there began for her a struggle which lasted her lifetime. It concerned her attitude towards the poor, which was like that of no one else. She was not born to work among them. There was no touch of Dinah Morris about her, still less of the organised worker. But the thought of the poor seldom left her. She was penetrated by the Christian ideal, the conception of true equality, born of love. It was part of her deepest being; it was part of her family heritage.

Most believers in Christian ideals are over-apt to substitute a kind of tender patronage for the brotherhood once preached in Judaea. Mary Coleridge, more humble and more candid, saw things in a different light. She took for granted that men should stand on one spiritual level; that the existence of a soul, alike in beggar, philosopher, and king, was the brevet of equality appointed by the King of kings to carry an authority annulling all distinctions. Without this equality in notions of truth and honour, she found real intercourse impossible. Philanthropic institutions, however splendid, left her cold and uninterested. They allowed no room for the play of personality, without which she felt depressed and ineffectual. When she began to work among the poor, it was this kind of friendship she was seeking. It was long before she gave up the search. Here and there she found exceptions; but she was duped and disappointed times out of number, and each time seemed to her a mere accident. And it was a profound disappointment when at last it dawned upon her that her hope could not be realised—that the obstacle to true equality lay, not only in the rich, but in the poor themselves. She saw things as they were, unblinded by the philanthropic exaltation which idealises sin and suffering; unconsoled by the formulae with which modern science explains away evil. Ugliness and coarseness repelled her; she shrank from the contact of vice. It was not that she did not see the virtues of poverty; she could be profoundly moved by the meekness, and the kindness, and the courage that she sometimes witnessed—by 'the quiet,

unconscious majesty of their endurance,' to use words of her own. But she had learnt her lesson. The poor, she now felt, could not be her brothers as she meant them to be.

We are not near enough to love,
I can but pity all your woe;
For wealth has lifted me above,
And falsehood set you down below.

If you were true, we still might be
Brothers in something more than name;
And were I poor, your love to me
Would make our differing bonds the same.

Love never comes but at love's call,
And pity asks for him in vain;
Because I cannot give you all,
You give me nothing back again.

And you are right with all your wrong,
For less than all is nothing too;
May Heaven beggar me ere long,
And Truth reveal herself to you.

So she wrote later in life. The gulf was always there for her, but she believed that others than herself might bridge it over. It was Tolstoy, the Tolstoy of the Parables, who, in these older days, taught her how, and made her see with his eyes. He showed her that wrong would never grow right till we practised the gospel precepts literally, and began to try and lead the divine life of love for all. It was the idea of larger love which attracted her, for love was the one authority she always acknowledged as supreme. Duty forbade her to leave home, so that the problems of living among the poor

were spared her. But for a long time she doubted whether she ought to write, instead of giving her time to working in some more active way for her kind—doubted and suffered in the process. Then she decided it in her own way.

'Tolstoy is a short cut, and I don't like short cuts to goodness,' said a friend in discussing the matter. 'That is not what keeps me,' answered Mary; 'I feel that Tolstoy is right, but that very few people are strong enough to lead the perfect life; I know that *I* am too weak, I *could* not live like that. But it is my own weakness which holds me; it is no fault of Tolstoy's.'

This 'call' to a wider Christianity was the only kind of 'call' that really appealed to her. For 'vocations,' cloistral or otherwise, that meant separation from human affection, she felt a kind of dismayed respect, but she did not understand them. She often thought them wrong.

'It grieves me very much to feel that you feel that you are taking a lower path in coming back. Our Lord did not tell every one to go and evangelise. He did not tell Lazarus to, for instance, nor any of that family; nor does He seem to have made it the theme of many of his discourses, except to the disciples. It will seem to me that He wants us to do what He gave us the power to do—not things that are against nature. I know you think that nature ought not to count—that faith should be everything—and that everything can be done by faith. And I see this side of it also. So that I feel most deeply for you about it. Only I think Love is a safe guide, and that, God being Love, we may always

yield to love without going wrong. It seems to me that you are yielding to love.'

Thus she wrote to one she cared for, who wished to be a missionary, but was prevented. The words represented her creed. Later, she went further towards a solution. She always showed a genius for teaching, had from earliest days taught needy pupils; and now she found in this pursuit a means of sincere intercourse with those below her. She sought out the working-girls who wished to learn, and their wish created an equality. For years she had a class at home; from 1895 onwards she taught at the Working Women's College. Of her lessons and her influence in that place there will be cause to speak hereafter.

The disregard of her literary work, compared with any kind of service to her fellows, only increased a natural inclination. She could not take her writing seriously. She was too humorous and too humble to do so. 'I shall always go on writing, because it amuses me so,' was the conclusion of her moral questionings, when debating her right to make books at all. She would write in odd corners, in odd postures, at odd moments—anyhow, so as to escape detection. She would allow every one to interrupt her. Any bore in human form who made a claim upon her seemed to her more important than what she was about. Indeed, to those who knew that her art would have profited by more respectful treatment, her self-neglect was often provoking. And, apart from this, Nature had handicapped her in her character of author. She suffered from a constitutional secretiveness about her

work which made her, the most truthful of beings, have recourse to innocent fibs, to any subterfuge, rather than reveal what she was writing—even to those who were nearest to her. Coleridge, we are told, used suddenly to hide himself in London for weeks together from his family. His great-niece had the same need for concealment. A question about her books would make her miserable—in early days to the point of tears. And although success helped her to be less nervous, it did not do away with this strange habit. To the last she disliked allusion to her books, and could hardly answer questions about them. This was in personal intercourse. As soon as she was alone with pen and paper, and could not see the person she was addressing, she did not much mind what she said. She was capable of the most surprising boldness by letter, and of nonplussing self-betrayals to the public. She could even write to authors unknown to her such praises as would have killed her to pronounce. They were, so to speak, confidences to the pillar-post, and once they were in that receptacle, she did not care.

Self-confidence, however, grew with success, and it was not long before success came. But it did not follow upon her first published novel, *The Seven Sleepers of Ephesus*, which appeared in 1893. The book, a reckless fantasia, the record of seven young men's adventures, was too wild an attempt to take with the public, and was more or less of a failure—a failure crowned by one laurel, the praise of Stevenson. And the laurel remained green when the failure had faded from her memory. She printed nothing

again until 1896. In 1895, the poet, Robert Bridges, was staying in the house of a relation who was also a friend of Mary Coleridge. He happened to pick up from the table a little volume of manuscript verse that was lying there, to glance at it, to find himself arrested. The poems, he said, *must* see the light; he wanted to know who had written them. This was his introduction to their author, the beginning of a friendship which became one of the chief refreshments of her life. And her visits to him and his family, at Yattenden first, then near Oxford, were among the events she loved to dwell upon. She was an ardent admirer of Bridges' work; she could hardly believe that he cared for anything of hers. Perhaps he alone could have persuaded this hider of her talents to give her poems, the record of years, in any form to the public. He did so, and they proceeded to enjoy much intercourse over the manuscript. From him she received criticism and technical training such as she had not had before, and the result was the slender grey paper book, *Fancy's Following*, by 'Anodos,' printed by the Daniel Press, and possessed by comparatively few, but precious to those who do possess it. She explains the source of her pseudonym in the pages of an old diary, while speaking of her resolve to keep a journal.

'For the piece, it shall be just my daily life, the life behind the scenes, and the audience shall sit at the back, and for the Dramatis Personae I will myself represent them, for of what other do I know anything? and lest this *I* should grow troublesome and impor-

tunate, I will christen myself over again, make George Macdonald my godfather, and name myself after my favourite hero, Anodos in *Phantastes*. . . . If Anodos dies or gets married, the work will be discontinued; no one writes diaries in Paradise. If not, *vogue la galère*.'

But if she were on no road, as the name she chose suggests, it was because she had stepped aside into the pathless meadows of poesy. None who know such haunts can miss the real poet's note of her verse—the fresh sincerity of her inspiration—the often gem-like choice of her words—and the subtle, quiet music of her metres, usually simple ones, but beautiful in their delicate interlacings.

Fancy's Following, and its successor, *Fancy's Guerdon*,[1] brought her appreciation from those whose opinion she valued. And among them was another poet besides Bridges, with whom she had sometime since formed a friendship. This was Canon Dixon, the friend of the Pre-Raphaelites, the lyrical mystic, about whom Mary wrote one of her most charming essays. 'The Hermit of Warkworth,' in *Non Sequitur*. With him she also corresponded, chiefly on poetic matters.

It is interesting that she learned to know both these poets mainly through correspondence. She had made acquaintance with them on her own merits, and that created an equality which did away with her shyness.

[1] *Fancy's Guerdon* contained several of the poems in *Fancy's Following*, besides a good many new ones. It was published by Elkin Matthews.

Whereas with such great men as Browning and Tennyson, who saw in her but her father's daughter, she formed no personal relation. Vivid and detailed are her descriptions of Tennyson's talk and of his reading, to which she had the chance of listening on many visits to Farringford, but there she was too timid to reveal herself—she remained an unobserved spectator.

Her poems were followed, in 1897, by her historical romance, *The King with Two Faces*, which had immediate success and suddenly brought her reputation. She herself told a friend in India the story of how it came to be written, and the account is worth quoting, because it gives a notion of the odd quality of her creativeness.

'About four years ago, one night when all the rest had gone to bed, the first chapter came into my head, and I scribbled it down, only putting letters for the different men, because I couldn't be bothered to find names. Why they were there—for whom they were waiting—what they wanted to kill him for—I couldn't imagine. It bothered me dreadfully. When I'd written about a page and a half, I stopped, but it almost made me feel ill to know that I *couldn't* go on. I should think a kettle might feel like that, if it wanted to boil and couldn't. However, it was no use; so I put it aside. Some time afterwards I came on the story of Ribbing in the memoirs of Alexandre Dumas, *père*, who was the bosom friend of his son, and all at once it flashed across me that this was the man. So I went on, and showed the beginning to two people who didn't care for it, and

to three people who did, and the three people who did were very encouraging and pulled it through somehow. . . . When I had done nearly half, a new Life of Gustav III. came out, and I had to make any number of alterations. . . . At last it got itself finished, and the committee struck out two purely historical chapters at the end (most interesting I thought they were—they were all by the best authorities).'

Her first chapters were generally conceived in this manner, and a distinguished writer once said of her that if a volume were made of her 'Beginnings' she would rank as a genius of the first order. But her creativeness was incomplete. It almost seemed as if she had not enough talent to support and sustain her genius. Yet that her imagination rang true there was striking proof. The novel was read by the Swedish Minister, whose wife was a descendant of the heroine; and he was startled to find in the account of her, an incident concerning her affairs which, as he thought, was known to none—was, indeed, only discoverable in certain private family papers. He had underrated the power of creative insight, and the author was enchanted.

The King was succeeded, in 1899, by *The Fiery Dawn*; and, in 1900, came her volume of Essays, *Non Sequitur*—to some the prose work of hers they love the best. Nineteen hundred and five brought *The Shadow on the Wall*, an early story revived, and printed to get money for her poor; and, in 1906, she gave us the maturest of her novels, *The Lady on the Drawing-room Floor*, a fascinating gossamer web of fact and fancy, of

human insight and poetic oversight, of graceful drollery and shadowy melancholy. And in the final year of her life she was busy over a mediaeval romance, which remained unfinished on her writing table, together with the last completed pages of a short life of Holman Hunt —the modern painter who, perhaps, most kindled her enthusiasm—written at his own request for a series of Artists' Biographies.

But the work by which her name will live, the perfected collection of her poems (two hundred and twenty-seven of them, including the original forty-five), did not appear till after her death. They were found in note-books and in letters, in odd corners here, there, and everywhere—these revelations of her innermost life; now deep and still, like the reflections in a pool, with here and there a trembling when the winds of thought swept over her; now more like a meteoric flash, quick, brilliant, lost in mist, before those who looked had grasped its presence.

Of her prose it is harder to speak. Her novels were the novels of a poet, and this was her weakness and her strength. In her writing she showed the same wilful love of mystification that she showed in her life. Will-o'-the-wisp-like, she would lead her reader the unkindest and crookedest of dances; anywhere to avoid walking straight. This perversity, added to a natural inability to construct, often made her stories obscure, and the plots very hard to follow. And then she had an almost paradoxical conviction of the fictitiousness of fact. 'Unreality attracts certain minds, as money attracts the

miser, rank the base-born, heroic death the young. The unreal denizens of that world are to some people dearer than flesh and blood. Not to all. "So natural, so real," say the people who live in world No. 1, when they read story-books; but they speak falsely. Life is not a story-book, or no stories need ever be written. . . . There is nothing so inconsistent, so inartistic as reality. Humorous it may be and pathetic—more humorous and more pathetic than any story that was ever written—but quite without that strange power of pleasing, and satisfying, which is the property of things and people that never were.' These words of hers are the keynote of her writing. They represent her constant conviction. But since she handled common things and human beings, it often led her astray; and criticism which would be unfair if she had only dealt in irresponsible fancy, is sometimes justified by her airy treatment of the real. On the other hand, the glamour of romance, the atmosphere of gallant paradox, the challenge from the Unseen to the seen, lend a charm, all their own, to her pages. Whether or no she could draw a man, whether or no her women live, *life* lives in her books—life, as she saw it, with the eyes of her pure quixotic spirit, by the light of her gay and nimble wit. And over every volume she wrote are scattered sayings, beautiful and helpful, words that enlighten and suggest, thoughts, impressions, that haunt us by their unconscious daring.

It was a surprise, and a happy one, that Mary Coleridge enjoyed her success, although she did not enjoy allusions to it. Her shy manners melted before

it. She no longer came into a room apologetically—her presence gained a certain repose. And she began to like accepting invitations.

'I've become very conceited,' she wrote; 'E. is not so conceited as I am, though she has been to see the descendants of her book, and they all . . . put on grand silk blouses in her honour. . . . She has never got over the fact that she bicycled down to them and appeared in a humble bicycling skirt. Now I appeared to mine robed in green and gold, with a Gainsborough hat.' It was, indeed, the best result of her growing reputation that her work put her into touch with the many minds to whom it appealed. It made friends for her outside her immediate circle, less distinguished than Bridges and Dixon, but stimulating to her intellect. Some were interesting, others were not, but often Mary did not know the difference. At all times of her life she had an unaccountable faculty for finding the dull and dowdy delightful, and full of strange attractions. Nor was this due to any Christian motive, but only to her power of falling in love—and falling in love faithfully. You could never tell whom Mary would like, or whom she would dislike, and as for the reasons of her feelings, they baffled herself as much as others. Her tastes and prejudices flowed in a whimsical channel, which seemed to lie quite apart from the rest of her gentle nature. If asked why she expressed antipathy or sympathy, she would only reiterate her verdict, she could not explain it. And sometimes it was not the dull people, but the frivolous, whom she liked incon-

sistently. Charming manners often had to do with it. They seldom failed to conquer her. Even with characters in books it was the same, and in youth, when she was reading *Wilhelm Meister*, her favourite woman was Philine, the light and feather-brained little actress; she could not endure the *Schöne Seele*, with all her noble aspirations.

There was, it is true, one kind of person she almost invariably liked. It was dangerous to bring her within earshot of an egoist, for egoists always captivated her. She never found them out, and she thought them the most fascinating beings. The more they made use of her, the more fascinating she thought them. It was partly because she was selfless and enjoyed devotion to others. But it was also because she worshipped vitality and a strong consciousness, the forces she longed for and missed in herself; forces which egoists possess, even although they may only lie in a strong consciousness of self. Mary Coleridge often wore herself out in the service of amiable despots, doing things for them that any drudge could have done as well, and thinking all the time what exceptional beings they were.

But to old friends and to new alike, what a friend she was! Those who had her friendship knew well that there was nothing like it. In a way that was hers alone, she lived the life of the heart. Her friends' existences were hers. She did not share their joys and sorrows—she identified herself with them; so much so, that she hardly distinguished them from her own, and thus, unknown to herself, they went on furnishing her with the experiences

she lacked. Some, indeed, of her poems that seem the most intimately personal give a false impression of wishes and sufferings she never had. They are inspired by what happened to those she loved—by feelings and episodes sometimes serious, sometimes transient, but intensified by her imagination. It was always the imagination of the heart, not the head. She had no curiosity, only sympathy. To have a success shared by Mary Coleridge was a revelation of generosity. Any triumph of those she cared for intoxicated her—there is no other word; the embarrassment she felt when she herself was praised was compensated for by her delight in the praise she heard of others. And as with their happiness, so with their grief. She was a lyre over whose responsive strings every emotion swept, making music. The letters that she wrote to those in sorrow are among the few that say the unsayable. She could not be conventional; she never tried to comfort; she knew that what is called 'getting over' a loss is the worst part of it. She feared to handle the unseen, and shrank from the glibness of religious commonplace. But all her words were transfused by a light from within that was kindled by faith in God.

> About the little chambers of my heart
> Friends have been coming—going—many a year.
> The door stands open there.
> Some, lightly stepping, enter; some depart.

Her own lines best describe her friendships.

One secret of her power was that to each inmate of

those chambers she gave such a devotion that it seemed as if he were her only friend. 'There 's nobody to say just the things you say; there 's nobody to whom I say just what I say to you. One bit of my heart is all dried up'—so she wrote to a friend who was abroad, but she might have used the words to any one absent member of her spacious commonwealth.

As she grew older, there were many young people who 'lightly stepped' in and out, with the confidences and merriment of youth: maidens whom she taught, and, towards the end, young men who came to her for literary criticism, for sympathy of all sorts. They filled her life with fresh interest. 'I could not do without new friendships—they refresh me,' she said two months before she died. And then there were the children she loved. She had a profound reverence for childhood, and it sometimes made her shy of them, till they, in turn, were shy of her. But when her diffidence vanished, there was no one they loved better; and those whom she enchanted by her stories, or those rarer and more favoured ones whom she took with her to see pictures and statues and to listen to her wonder-tales about them, are not likely to forget what she told them, or to lose her image from their hearts.

So she lived, surrounded by those she loved. Yet it must not be supposed that she was constantly dependent upon companionship. She could not get on without solitude. 'It has been wonderful; solitude is so exciting,' was her comment on a long time of loneliness which her friends had dreaded for her. Her quickened

imagination had possessed her; thronging fancies had been her guests.

As to her relations to books, they were much like her relations to people. To books she gave the same kind of criticism—wayward, enthusiastic, unreasoned. She seldom went back upon a judgment, because it was based upon something instinctive, stronger than herself, which made her unconvertible. She was fond, as has been seen, of powerful or strange effects in literature, and was surprisingly a modern in her likings. In life, she shrank from violence—in art it often gave her pleasure. She welcomed Renoir and Monet with delight, and found in them nothing that puzzled her. And she hailed Ibsen in a day when very few acknowledged him. These advanced tastes of hers stood out in unexpected contrast to the almost old-fashioned modesty and self-restraint of her character—in contrast, also, to her admiration for the Pre-Raphaelites. But she was always many-sided, and, in her, the love for one kind of art did not preclude an equal love for another. Her modernness did not interfere with her classicism, but she had a great mistrust of any grooves and of any academic shibboleth. Yet, catholic though she was, you could never wholly count upon her. You might bring her a poem that you would have sworn she would care for, you might enjoy the prospect of sharing it with her and then be met by a disappointing blank. She was probably put off by some heaviness, or offended by some detail; for it was another of her peculiarities that detail often struck her first, sometimes to the injury of main outlines. 'I always

remember kittens and balls of worsted instead of the big things,' she wrote—'It is a terrible mistake to be born with such a capacity for seeing details that you never see anything else. And even the details generally belong to something I don't think they belong to.' All these qualities made her a stimulating, but not a safe literary counsellor. The reviews that she wrote for the *Monthly Review* and *Guardian*, and, from 1902 onwards, for the *Times Literary Supplement*, are always charming bits of herself and sometimes good pieces of criticism. But unequal though she was as a reviewer, she never failed to be a fine and sane judge of all that was really great, of all that was really petty. And when set on some special task, such as advising a fellow-writer, her pronouncements gave new light and lent fresh impulse. For herself, she avoided criticism, because she knew how impossible it was, however she might wish it, to alter what she had written—at least as far as her stories were concerned. In verbal matters, and in poetry, she could sometimes change, and she would do so, when she could, with the best will in the world, although she knew very well how to hold her own, with a breezy power of resistance. And no one was stricter or more conscientious with herself. She corrected and re-corrected and re-wrote, with a scrupulous perseverance.

Music was the taste that developed last in her. Her love for it was growing when she died. She always cared for opera, and it was characteristic of her that she early became spell-bound by Wagner. But here the poetry counted, perhaps, for more than the music. Her

sister's playing first revealed Beethoven to her—late in the day—and, after him, Brahms. And gradually music expressed for her things that nothing else could express.

> Voice of the stars when earth arose from sleep,
> And Light, the Eldest Child of God, was born
> And flashed his beams across the shining deep.
> Voice of the Angels, ere the ruddy morn
> Had clomb the Palestinian mountains steep,
> While drowsy shepherds watched beside their sheep.

These lines are called 'Music' in her note-book.

One of the pleasures that she most enjoyed, but seldom indulged in, was travel. In her youth she went yearly to Germany, and Germany, the land of fairy-tale, was well suited to her fancy. But, as with most poets, it was Italy that possessed her. She was never in Rome, but once she went to Florence and Perugia, and once she saw Venice. She was with her great friends, the Fuller-Maitlands, and that holiday worked magic in her imagination.

For the rest, she shall speak for herself, in two letters from abroad. The first is written in 1893 from Perugia.

'I am off my head with happiness. I feel as if I'd come not to a Fatherland but to a Motherland that I had always longed for and never known. How I am ever to leave it I don't know. How I am ever to be happy anywhere else I can't think. "Here will I dwell, for I have a delight therein." . . . We went to Assisi yesterday. . . . The little black Della Robbia of St. Francis, its dim eyes gazing out of the darkness where the darkness of death fell upon him, struck me more

than anything else; if I had had five minutes alone there, my own eyes would have spoken to his in tears. The white Nativity on the other side of the church fills the very name of Santa Maria degli Angeli with light. Heavenly joy and divine sorrow, that is indeed a House of God which holds them both. Of the pictures here, I love best the stiff Bonfigli Pietà. . . . I am also deeply attached to the jam-tart angel, and to two of Caporali's, and to a charming ox with his paws curled round St. Luke's Gospel. . . . I stood on the steps (of the Cathedral) this morning and tried to fancy Fra Bernardino preaching from that little open pulpit and all the excited people crying in the Piazza. One seems to have travelled far away not only in space but in time. It would surprise me much less to meet Benedict XI. round the corner than it would to see Oscar Wilde.'

The second letter came from the *Römischer Kaiser*, at Freiburg im Breisgau.

'This is the dearest, queerest little city. Whenever any one dies or gets married they build a little pink tower and as likely as not, they roof it with bright green tiles. The troops are always manœuvring, the Grand Duke is always having a birthday, or the Patron Saint a Festival. The streets bubble and splash with running streams and fountains—the lovely Cathedral broods on its nest of gabled houses like a great bird—in the stuffy but charming theatre Tannhäuser and Wilhelm Tell are crowned with wreaths of German asters. The priests are very nice indeed and wear neat violet sashes. This house was built in 1408. All sorts of emperors, Roman

and otherwise, appear to have stayed in it. If they get such excellent *Windbeutel* as we do, I 'm sure I don't wonder.'

. . . . . .

Three years before this letter was written, the Coleridges' close family circle was broken up. In 1898 Mary's mother died, leaving her more than ever the companion of the father she so adored. She, he, and her sister formed an indivisible trio. No one ever dared to think of them apart. But outside the well-loved home Mary had suffered painful losses. Many of her friends were older by a generation than herself, and one by one they had passed away. Then, within her own household, came the dangerous illness of her sister, and again she was face to face with death. The blow did not fall and her dearest was spared to her, but the deep distress of the suspense left its ineffaceable traces. All these things made her think even more constantly about the subjects that had always haunted her—about the mystery of dying and the hidden problems beyond death. Her poems show us how omnipresent such thoughts became with her. 'This world grows more and more shadowy, and the other world more real as I grow older,' she said to a friend not long before she died; and when cares thickened round her it sometimes seemed as if she could no longer bear the strain of mortality except by flight into the world of the imagination. A spiritual imagination—and one which is better described by that attribute than by the word religious. For though Mary Coleridge was religious, and deeply so, no four walls

could contain her faith. It was diffused throughout her being—her work, her play, her tears, her laughter. She was imbued with a mystical sense of the divine in human life, and although a beautiful service appealed to her in church, more than all in a cathedral, she disliked any ritual in daily existence, any set times even for devotion, any hard and fast rule for conduct—and most when such rules interfered with natural habits and affections. 'Don't you find the Life of Pascal very depressing?' she wrote, 'Saints who object to their sisters kissing them puzzle me more than a murder.' But the more she disregarded formulas, the more deeply did she care for the truth behind them. Born into the Church of England, she remained in it; she was loyal to its traditions, and loved, as she said, to kneel where her forefathers had knelt. But as she grew older, faith seemed to her larger than any set of beliefs; the life of Christ more vital than Christianity.

'I went . . . this morning to hear the Bishop,' runs a letter, 'and at the end of nearly two hours of him, felt how much better the time would have been employed reading to an old woman in Yeoman's Row or looking at pictures in the National Gallery. . . . All the detestableness of modern words cannot spoil the Gospel. I took to that when the Bishop failed this morning, and wondered how people can love things about it better than the thing itself.'

The last words are characteristic. She was hardly ever severe, but she was so towards those who put a strained interpretation on central facts and thus stretched

the bounds of orthodoxy. Herself a Christian, she had a fellow-feeling for heresies and heterodoxies, so long as they were straightforward. But the assumption of figurative meanings in the place of simple truths, the evasion of facts in religion by means of high-flown fancy, seemed quibbling in her eyes, and the glib envisagement of faith which they encouraged more false than either the rigours of dogmatism, or the arid ethics of Herbert Spencer.

For Mary Coleridge had known doubts. She had suffered from them often. And so she always had sympathy with those who did not get beyond doubts, and felt a strong attraction for writers who, like Amiel, could analyse them with delicacy and reverence. But hers were not the doubts of modern thought; they were the fears—the misty fears—of a poet. Sometimes they closed in upon her for a little, and she seemed like one who moved through thronging shadows and fought them with a silver sword. Imagination came to her help and brought her through; the same imagination that plunged her in, leading her to places that she never meant to reach. For it was more daring than she knew. The poet in her was bolder than the woman, and therefore there were conflicts in her soul. Yet the poet it was that came to the rescue.

> What am I? Next door to nothing, but a point in boundless space;
> Made of something that I know not, masked and witnessed by a face.
> Caught and firmly held together by a Body and a Mind,
> With Eternity before it, and Eternity behind.

What is walking, running, leaping to the joy of airy flight?
What is sight beside the seeing in the Infinite of sight?
What were knowledge, what were wisdom, were I wise and
when I knew?
Truth itself were Truth no longer, if a man could prove it true.

It was thus that she continued to achieve belief. The lamp of her faith might flicker in the wind, but it never went out; it was held by a steady hand. And if the flame was not fiery, it was pure. 'If I die, I am going to God,' the words were among the last she spoke.

It has seemed needful to say as much, because her poems have sometimes given a wrong impression. She got in verse relief from doubts that pressed upon her, and so she constantly gave them voice. Whereas that central belief in God and the soul which never faded from her, which made itself felt in her presence, and gave her that kind of glowing humility unlike any other—this remained as her treasure and her strength, and found expression much more rarely.

She never dealt in heroics; yet perhaps she envied, although she did not share, the single vision of the fanatic. Gordon was the hero she chose—Gordon who served man and gave himself and obeyed no law but that of his soul.

O mighty spirit, whither art thou fled?
No mate was found in all the world for thee;
Whom hast thou chosen for thy company
In all the shadowy regions of the dead?

So she wrote of the man who was both saint and daring adventurer, enthusiast, and humorist. He summed up much that she herself would have liked to be.

It is difficult to give even the most inadequate idea of Mary Coleridge's soul. It is as difficult to give any true impression of her appearance—of the fair hair, the small head, the long swaying figure, which stooped rather forwards when she moved, or when she talked with self-forgetfulness. She looked very much like one of the women in Blake's pictures. Her form had the same quality of intangibleness—her step seemed to tread upon air. And she also bore a resemblance to a certain lady of Fra Angelico's—slender, devout—who, full of a gay spirituality and seated on the ground with her companions, is bending towards a preacher in a pulpit and drinking in his words with her soul. She would have looked well in that dress of early Florence, better still, perhaps, in Blake draperies. As it was, she hardly knew what she had on, although picturesque clothes on others delighted her. Whatever ornaments she wore were characteristic. Many of her best jewels she had sold to help the poor, but she never parted with any that her friends had given her. To her they were symbols, not ornaments. And there were others, emblems of old associations, that were always part of her person. All who knew her will remember the coral charm against the evil eye that had dangled since her childhood from her watch-chain. Rings she would have none of; she said they fettered her; nor would they have suited her hands, 'those little spirit-hands of hers,' delicate yet strong. They were as significant as her eyes—blue eyes with gleams of grey, rather observant than dreamy. Her dreaminess was expressed more by her mouth, but that too was very mobile: some-

times still and rather sad, sometimes gay with a little amused smile, full of a droll indulgence; or eager with that other kind of smile, responsive, expectant, which lit her face when you told her of something you admired, and she had caught your pleasure almost before you had expressed it. Yet when all is said, one can but return to the word 'spiritual' as the only one that describes her, body and soul.

> For while she did this lower world adorn,
> Her body seem'd rather assumed than born;
> So rarified, advanced, so pure and whole,
> That body might have been another's soul.

Those lines of a seventeenth-century poet seem made for Mary Coleridge.

It was perhaps because there was this unity about her that her diffident presence seldom failed to make a strong impression, even upon those who had only seen her once. Many of these of every class wrote to say so after her death. 'She was *good*,' said the landlady of some lodgings where she had stayed.—'No, she wasn't; she was something much better than good.' And nowhere was the impression stronger than in the Working Women's College, where, for her last twelve years, on Tuesday evenings, she held a class on English literature.[1] How she kindled their tired minds, after their long day's work, with the love of prose and poetry, was a feat in itself. But more wonderful still was the way she won the

[1] For a while, at the outset, she taught English grammar, but she was glad when a vacancy in a teachership allowed her to undertake the class for literature.

confidence of all these varied characters, and thus, with them, bridged over every barrier, affecting the nature of each, firing all with the love of goodness. When she died, the class was given up altogether. Her pupils would not learn from any one else.

Her last illness seized her with a sharp suddenness. She had gone, as she did every year, with her father and sister to Harrogate. She had been feeling low and tired. One afternoon she had been left at home upon a sofa, only wanting repose. When her family came back from a walk, they found her radiant, absorbed in Shakespeare. 'Life is worth living,' she said, 'as long as there is *King Lear* to read.'

Then there came severe attacks of pain—a needful operation—and the end. That end was like herself. She knew that she was dying, and she remembered to send her love to all the household, even to the 'odd man.' She had visions on her bed, of roses, of a bird, larger and more beautiful than any she had ever seen. To the last she showed her love of grace and beauty. And to the last she also kept her graciousness. To her, life and death were of one texture.

'I see no object in this detestable flight of Time,' she once wrote—'Where 's he flying to? Why should we pretend to like it? Birthdays now seem to me to be like the lamp-posts along a road, when you are nearing the end of a long, dark, delicious drive, and however tired you may be, are still absolutely uninclined to make the effort of getting out of the comfortable home of a carriage, and settling yourself in a new house. I like

temporary conditions, and the freedom of them. I can hardly remember any drive—even to the house of celestial people—to the end of which I was not sorry to come, for the moment. And "Forever" is such a big house. Not that I think like this always or often. For the most part, I don't remember my own getting old at all, other people's getting older is so much worse.'

The 'long dark delicious' journey is over and she has reached that 'big house' of rest. The chill autumn vapours will not reach her: she cannot grow old.

STORIES

UNTER DEN LINDEN

'No,' said Sophy, the cousin of Mr. Cocks-Danvers.

'Yes, please,' said Mr. Cocks-Danvers, the cousin of Sophy.

It is perhaps as well to state definitely, at the outset, the exact degree of their relationship. They were seconds, twice removed.

Whenever Sophy wanted to take a walk alone with Mr. Cocks-Danvers, she remembered this.

Whenever Sophy's papa said that he objected to the intermarrying of relations, Mr. Cocks-Danvers forgot it. On the present occasion he had forgotten it altogether. But certain other memories came between him and the words that he wanted to say, as they had come between over and over again during the last few years of his life.

And this was fortunate for Sophy's papa.

'Well!' said Sophy, weighing out her words slowly, as if every one of them were an item in a long list of self-sacrifices, 'if you will—make me tell you—what I really and truly think of it——'

'Why on earth should I want to hear what you don't really and truly think of it, Sophy?'

'Oh, I don't know! You are very rude to imply that I should tell stories. But then it's literary to be rude, is it not? Literary men in books generally are, especially

to the heroine. Why should we talk about our thoughts at all? Silence is golden.'

'Give me change then! I want the silver.'

'The plot is magnificent,' Sophy observed—'It reminds me of one of Stevenson's best, only there's a something about it that Stevenson has not got. And your sense of humour is quite delightful, Charles, and it never leaves a bad taste in one's mouth like some of the jokes in those horrid *Plain Tales from the Hills*. And the description of the tiger hunt kept me awake for hours last night.'

'My dear Sophy, I once had the felicity of overhearing an interview of yours with your cook. When I heard you say "The *entrée* was a great success," I wished for one distracted moment that I had been that happy person. When you added, "*But as for the sweet things*," I thanked my stars that I was not——'

'Even her second cousin, twice removed?'

'Oh, hang that cousinly business. Won't you begin upon the sweets at once? Suspense is cruel. Skip my general superiority to Robert Louis and Rudyard, and come to the point at once!'

'Well, then,' said Sophy, 'if you must have it, the love-making is all wrong. People don't make love in that way.'

'How on earth do you know?'

'You don't understand women,' said Sophy.

'No,' said Charles, with more asperity than the occasion seemed to call for. 'And upon my soul, I'm glad I do not! I thought I understood one woman, anyhow. But I believe they are all alike, and they're all humbugs. There is not one that really says what she means.'

'Of course not,' said Sophy. 'She would be a man if she did. Besides, the story happened last September,

and you have described her in a dress just like the one I was wearing when I saw you the first time three years ago. How could that possibly be right? It is the sort of thing a critic would come down upon like a sledge-hammer.'

'Do you think he would notice such a little slip?' said Charles dubiously.

'Not if he were a *he*; but he's very often a *she* nowadays. And they write in the *Saturday* and the *Athenæum* and everywhere! You really must alter the dress.'

Charles considered her attentively.

'Can't I stick her into the gown you've got now?' he asked.

'That only shows how perfectly inane the cleverest men are,' said Sophy. 'I always thought you had an eye for these things. So you have, in a way. You recollect most wonderfully. But don't you see that to expose a woman in the future is as great a mistake as to muffle her up in the past? She is never behind the age; but if she's a nice woman, she is never before it.'

'And you don't think Celia a nice woman?'

'Not at all,' said Sophy, with emphasis.

'Good heavens, Sophy, I thought she was exactly like you!'

'Did you? How strange!'

'Of course, when I conceived the character, I had no idea that any one had ever proposed to you.'

'Who told you any one had?' she cried indignantly.

'You yourself. You said people did not make love in that way. It is clear to the meanest intelligence that somebody must have made love to you in another.'

Sophy contemplated the branches of the lime-tree under which they were sitting, and repressed an unfemi-

nine desire to whistle. After all, the frankest woman in the world is an impenetrable mystery to the most subtle-minded man; and Charles was not even so subtle as Sophy thought him.

'I want to know what happens in the next chapter,' she said. 'Tell me the end of the story!'

'Oh, I've not worked it out yet. It's very difficult to invent an original ending.'

'It must be very difficult indeed,' said Sophy, sympathetically. 'That is the worst of stories, they're all so like each other. Men's women are never anything else but men and women, whether it's India, or the Highlands, or Whitechapel. A man falls in love with a woman, a woman falls in love with a man, and then they marry or don't marry, or they die, or one of them dies and the other does not. I should make Celia die if I were you.'

'What crime has she committed,' said Charles, 'excepting that she tried to be like you, Sophy, and failed? Is it not rather hard to pass sentence of death on her for that? No, I shall make Middleton die!'

'And leave me a widow!' said Sophy. 'What a shame! Widows' weeds are most dreadfully unbecoming. Venus herself could not look well in them. No, please don't kill Middleton, whatever you do! I rather—like him.'

'You don't behave as if you did,' said Charles, looking at her so steadfastly that he compelled her to turn and look at him. 'But if I could, I would rather give the story a good ending.'

'Why, may I ask?'

'Woe does not sell well. The publishers object to it. Would it be quite impossible for me to end with a wedding, do you think?'

'Quite impossible, if you let Celia go on in that way. But she never would have gone on in that way. That's what vexes me. Men think women are such donkeys. How could you make her believe that he had acted dishonourably?'

'How could she help believing it, when he told her himself?'

'Just the very reason why she would not have believed it!'

'But she saw it with her own eyes.'

'The evidence of the senses,' said Sophy pompously, 'is allowed on all hands to be worthless. They are always deceiving us.'

'I suppose you admire Shakespeare's Troilus for refusing to credit his eyes when they told him that Cressida was false. I must confess that always appears to me overstrained. And then he had to believe them in the end, you know. Love may be blind, but he's not so blind as all that.'

'I never read *Troilus and Cressida*,' said Sophy in the tone of one who proclaims a virtuous action, 'therefore I cannot judge. But a person who believes ill of a friend is just as mean as mean can be.'

'Ahem!' said Charles, and he hummed the first lines of a song:

> 'I could not love thee, dear, so much,
> Loved I not honour more.

It was a man who wrote that undoubtedly. But can you say he was wrong, even with that obvious disqualification?'

'Rubbish!' said Sophy. 'You don't love a man because he is good; you love him because you love him.

Why did Middleton like Celia? Because she had a soup kitchen, and taught in the Sunday school, I suppose?'

'No, it was not exactly that,' said Charles; 'but Sophy, if—if I change all this to please you, if I make Celia do what no woman in her senses would do—will you——'

'Will I what?'

'Be Celia and—accept Middleton?'

'But you are not Middleton,' said Sophy, and this time it was the look in her eyes that drew her cousin's round to them.

'Yes, but I am. I always wanted to tell you, Sophy. But I'm a fool. I could not. I thought you'd hate me for it. It was before I knew you.'

'You did tell me,' said Sophy. 'Do you think I did not understand what kept you silent these three years? I always wanted to tell you that I did not mind—much.'

It was borne in on the mind of Sophy's papa, as he entered the Lime Walk at that moment, that he was too late to make any new observations about the intermarrying of cousins.

[1890]

THE KING IS DEAD, LONG LIVE THE KING[1]

It was not very quiet in the room where the king lay dying. People were coming and going, rustling in and out with hushed footsteps, whispering eagerly to each other; and where a great many people are all busy making as little noise as possible, the result is apt to be a kind of bustle, that weakened nerves can scarcely endure.

But what did that matter? The doctors said he could hear nothing now. He gave no sign that he could. Surely the sobs of his beautiful young wife, as she knelt by the bedside, must else have moved him.

For days the light had been carefully shaded. Now, in the hurry, confusion, and distress, no one remembered to draw the curtains close, so that the dim eyes might not be dazzled. But what did that matter? The doctors said he could see nothing now.

For days no one but his attendants had been allowed to come near him. Now the room was free for all who chose to enter. What did it matter? The doctors said he knew no one.

So he lay for a long time, one hand flung out upon the counterpane, as if in search of something. The queen took it softly in hers, but there was no answering pressure.

[1] From *Rare Bits*, September 1890.

At length the eyes and mouth closed, and the heart ceased to beat.

'How beautiful he looks,' they whispered one to another.

When the king came to himself it was all very still—wonderfully and delightfully still, as he thought, wonderfully and delightfully dark. It was a strange, unspeakable relief to him—he lay as if in heaven. The room was full of the scent of flowers, and the cool night air came pleasantly through an open window. A row of wax tapers burned with soft radiance at the foot of the bed on which he was lying, covered with a velvet pall, only his head and face exposed. Four or five men were keeping guard around him, but they had fallen fast asleep.

So deep was the feeling of content which he experienced that he was loth to stir. Not till the great clock of the palace struck eleven, did he so much as move. Then he sat up with a light laugh.

He remembered how, when his mind was failing him, and he had rallied all his powers in one last passionate appeal against the injustice which was taking him away from the world just when the world most needed him, he had heard a voice saying, 'I will give thee yet one hour after death. If, in that time, thou canst find three that desire thy life, live!'

This was his hour, his hour that he had snatched away from death. How much of it had he lost already? He had been a good king; he had worked night and day for his subjects; he had nothing to fear, and he knew that it was very pleasant to live, how pleasant he had never known before, for, to do him justice, he was not selfish; it was his unfinished work

that he grieved about when the decree went forth against him. Yet, as he passed out of the room where the watchers sat heavily sleeping, things were changed to him somehow. The burning sense of injustice was gone. Now that he came to think of it, he had done very little. True that it was his utmost, but there were many better men in the world, and the world was large, very large it seemed to him now. Everything had grown larger. He loved his country and his home as well as ever, but in the night it had seemed as if they must perish with him, and now he knew that they were still unchanged.

Outside the door he paused a moment, hesitating whither to go first. Not to the queen. The very thought of her grief unnerved him. He would not see her till he could once more clasp her in his arms, and bid her weep tears of joy only because he was come again. After all, he had but an hour to wait. Before the castle clock struck twelve, he would be back again in life, remembering these things only as a dream. He sighed a little to think of it.

'All that to do over again some day,' he said, as he recalled his last moments.

Almost he turned again to the couch he had so lately left.

'But I have never yet done anything through fear,' said the king.

And he smiled as he thought of the terms of the compact. His city lay before him in the moonlight.

'I could find three thousand as easily as three,' he said. 'Are they not all my friends?'

As he passed out of the gate, he saw a child sitting on the steps, crying bitterly.

'What is the matter, little one?' said the sentinel on guard, stopping a moment.

'Father and mother have gone to the castle, because the king's dead,' sobbed the child, 'and they've never come back again; and I'm so tired and so hungry! And I've had no supper, and my doll's broken. Oh! I do wish the king were alive again!'

And she burst into a fresh storm of weeping. It amused the king not a little.

'So this is the first of my subjects that wants me back!' he said.

He had no child of his own. He would have liked to try and comfort the little maiden, but there were other calls upon him just then. He was on his way to the house of his great friend, the man whom he loved more than all others. A kind of malicious delight possessed him, as he pictured to himself the deep dejection he should find him in.

'Poor Amyas!' he said. 'I know what I should be feeling in his place. I am glad he was not taken. I could not have borne his loss.'

As he entered the courtyard of his friend's house, lights were being carried to and fro, horses were being saddled, an air of bustle and excitement pervaded the place. Look where he might, he could not see the face he knew so well. He entered at the open door. His friend was not in the hall. Room after room he vainly traversed—they were all empty. A sudden horror took him. Surely Amyas was not dead of grief?

He came at length to a small private apartment, in which they had spent many a happy, busy hour together; but his friend was not here either, though, to judge by appearances, he could only just have left it. Books and

papers were tumbled all about in strange confusion, and bits of broken glass strewed the floor.

A little picture was lying on the ground. The king picked it up, and recognised a miniature of himself, the frame of which had been broken in the fall. He let it drop again, as if it had burnt him. The fire was blazing brightly, and the fragments of a half-destroyed letter lay, unconsumed as yet, in the fender. It was in his own writing. He snatched it up, and saw it was the last he had written, containing the details of an elaborate scheme which he had much at heart. He had only just thrown it back into the flames when two people entered the room, talking together, one a lady, the other a man, booted and spurred as though he came from a long distance.

'Where is Amyas?' he asked.

'Gone to proffer his services to the new king, of course,' said the lady. 'We are, as you may think, in great anxiety. He has none of the ridiculous notions of his predecessor, who, indeed, hated him cordially. The very favour Amyas has hitherto enjoyed will stand in his way at the new court. I only hope he may be in time to make his peace. He can, with truth, say that he utterly disapproved of the foolish reforms which his late master was bent on making. Of course, he was fond of him in a way; but we must think of ourselves, you know. People in our position have no time for sentiment. He started almost immediately after the king's death. I am sending his retinue after him.'

'Quite right,' said the gentleman, whom the king now knew as one of his ambassadors. 'I shall follow him at once. Between you and me, it is no bad thing for the country. That poor boy had no notion of states-

manship. He forced me to conclude a peace which would have been disastrous to all our best interests. Happily, we shall have war directly now. Promotions in the army would have been at a standstill if he had had his way.'

The king did not stay to hear more.

'I will go to my people,' he said. 'They at least have no interest to make peace with my successor. He will but take from them what I gave.'

He heard the clock strike the first quarter as he went. He was, indeed, a very remarkable king, for he knew his way to the poorest part of his dominions. He had been there before, often and often, unknown to any one; and the misery which he had there beheld had stirred and steeled him to attempt what had never before been attempted.

No one about the palace knew where he had caught the malignant fever which carried him off. He had a shrewd suspicion himself, and he went straight to that quarter.

'Fevers won't hurt me now,' he said laughing. The houses were as wretched, the people looked as sickly and squalid as ever. They were standing about in knots in the streets, late though it was, talking together about him. His name was in every mouth. The details of his illness, and the probable day of his funeral, seemed to interest them more than anything else.

Five or six men were sitting drinking round a table in a disreputable-looking public-house, and he stopped to overhear their conversation.

'And a good riddance, too!' said one of them, whom he knew well. 'What 's the use of a king as never spends a farthing more than he can help? It gives no impetus

to trade, it don't. The new fellow's a very different sort. We shall have fine doings soon.'

'Ay!' struck in another, 'a meddlesome, priggish sort of chap, he was, always aworritting us about clean houses, and such like. What right's *he* got to interfere, I'd like to know?'

'Down with all kings! says I,' put in a third; 'but if we're to have 'em, let 'em behave as sich. I like a young fellow as isn't afraid of his missus, and knows port wine from sherry.'

'Wanted to abolish capital punishment, he did!' cried a fourth. 'Thought he'd get more work out of the poor fellows in prison, I suppose? Depend on it, there's some reason like that at the bottom of it. We ain't so very perticular about the lives of our subjects for nothing, we ain't'; an expression of opinion in which all the rest heartily concurred. The clock struck again as the king turned away; he felt as if a storm of abuse from some one he had always hated would be a precious balm just then. He entered the state prison, and made for the condemned cell. Capital punishment was not abolished yet, and in this particular instance he had certainly felt glad of it.

The cell was tenanted only by a little haggard-looking man, who was writing busily on his knee. The king had only seen him once before, and he looked at him curiously.

Presently the gaoler entered, and with him the first councillor, a man whom his late master had greatly loved and esteemed. The convict looked up quickly.

'It was not to be till to-morrow,' he said. Then, as if afraid he had betrayed some cowardice, 'but I am ready at any moment. May I ask you to give this paper to my wife?'

'The king is dead,' said the first councillor gravely. 'You are reprieved. His present majesty has other views. You will, in all probability, be set at large to-morrow.'

'Dead?' said the man with a stunned look.

'Dead!' said the first councillor, with the impressiveness of a whole board.

The man stood up, passing his hand across his brow.

'Sir,' he said earnestly, 'I respected him. For all he was a king, he treated me like a gentleman. He, too, had a young wife. Poor fellow, I wish he were alive again!'

There were tears in the man's eyes as he spoke.

The third quarter struck as the king left the prison. He felt unutterably humiliated. The pity of his foe was harder to bear than the scorn of his friends. He would rather have died a thousand deaths than owe his life to such a man. And yet, because he was himself noble, he could not but rejoice to find nobility in another. He said to himself sternly that it was not worth what he had gone through. He reviewed his position in no very self-complacent mood. The affection he had so confidently relied upon was but a dream. The people he was fain to work for were not ripe for their own improvement. A foolish little child, a generous enemy, these were his only friends. After all, was it worth while to live? Had he not better go back quietly and submit, making no further effort? He had learnt his lesson; he could 'lie down in peace, and sleep, and take his rest.' The eternal powers had justified themselves. What matter though every man had proved a liar? The bitterness had passed away, and he seemed to see clearly.

Thick clouds had gathered over the moon, and the cold

struck through him. All at once a sense of loneliness that cannot be described rushed over him, and his heart sank. Was there really no one who cared—no one? He would have given anything at that moment for a look, a single word of real sympathy. He longed with sick longing for the assurance of love.

There were yet a few moments left. How had he borne to wait so long? This, at least, he was sure of, and this was all the world to him. He began to find comfort and consolation in the thought; he forgave—indeed he almost forgot—the rest. Yet he had fallen very low, for, as he stood at the door of his wife's room, he hesitated whether to go in. What if this, too, were an illusion? Had he not best go back before he knew?

'But I have never yet done anything through fear,' said the king.

His wife was sitting by the fire alone, her face hidden, her long hair falling round her like a veil. At the first sight of her, a pang of self-reproach shot through him. How could he ever have doubted?

She was wearing a ring that he had given her—a ring she wore always, and the light sparkled and flashed from the jewel. Except for this, there was nothing bright in the room.

He ardently desired to comfort her. He wondered why all her ladies had left her. Surely one might have stayed with her on this first night of her bereavement? She seemed to be lost in thought. If she would only speak, or call his name! But she was quite silent.

A slight noise made the king start. A secret door in the wall opened, the existence of which he had thought was known only to himself and his queen, and a man stood before her.

She put her finger to her lips, as though to counsel silence, and then threw herself into his arms.

'You have come,' she said—'Oh, I am so glad! I had to hold his hand when he was dying. I was frightened sitting here by myself. I thought his ghost would come back, but he will never come back any more. We may be happy always now,' and drawing the ring from her finger, she kissed it, weeping, and gave it to him.

When midnight struck, the watchers wakened with a start, to find the king lying stark and stiff, as before, but a great change had come over his countenance.

'We must not let the queen see him again,' they said.

THE DEVIL AT THE GUILDHALL

A FRAGMENT

'I DON'T believe in him,' said a girl.

'I do,' said a man.

They were standing at the Guildhall, in front of Millais' picture of 'The Enemy sowing Tares.' The words were forced from them by the overmastering power which a work of art exerts over certain natures, the tyrannical convincingness of an assertion compelling instant negation or consent. To each the other's voice came only as the utterance of that opposite half of self which speaks in the deliberations of those who are vividly conscious of the process of thought and emotion.

'If you do believe in him,' Althea said, using the pronoun as she often used it when talking to herself for another form of the word *I*, 'what becomes of the power of God?'

'If you don't believe in it, can you not see that God is not God alone, but the devil?'

'If you do believe in him,' said Althea again, 'you shrink from fathoming the depths of evil in yourself.'

'If you don't believe in it, there is no refuge left but suicide.'

For the first time Althea, conscious that a discordant note had been struck in this curious duet, turned her

eyes from the illustration of the parable to look at her fellow-performer.

Suicide.

Her quick womanish fancy had far more ghastly illustrations before it in a moment. She was obliged to look at him to dispel them.

And as she looked, he seemed so very unlike the central figure of her fancy, drowning, shooting, stabbing, poisoning itself, that she could not restrain a smile, and having smiled, she quickly blushed, recollecting who she was, what she had said and where, and moved away.

Nevertheless, though she stood long before 'The Wheel of Fortune,' apparently in rapt contemplation, what she saw all the time was still 'The Enemy sowing Tares,' and the man who believed in it.

Distance does more than lend enchantment to the view. At a few feet from the object of interest it is proper to indulge in observations that would be most improper within an inch of him.

There was no one else in the room, as it happened.

The object of interest had not once turned his eyes on Althea; they were still fixed in a long, critical stare. He was the mildest and most inoffensive-looking of mortals, dressed with that prim correctness which annoys the feminine mind by showing too much of the sincerest form of flattery.

'As neat as a new pin,' flashed through her brain.

His red hair made it yet more annoying; red hair, when perfectly smooth, looks aggressively red. He held a minute magenta pencil in his hand, with which he was marking his catalogue. She hated magenta. With the deliberateness that marked most of his actions, he made

two small crosses on either side of the name of the picture, and closed the list.

'It is like,' she heard him mutter.

And turning neither to the right nor to the left he stepped cautiously down the staircase—he was near-sighted evidently—and passed out by the exit from the great room below.

Althea smiled at herself for watching him, though she had taken her notes with such scrupulous care that no one watching her could possibly have been aware of what she had been doing. Then she returned to the study of the picture which had provoked her first comment.

The management of light struck her imagination forcibly, the thick, lurid glow across the sky, and on the river.

'The light that is in it is darkness,' she said to herself. Also, the gleam upon the evil teeth. 'Seeking whom he may devour.'

She passed beyond the sphere of quotation, and became absorbed in an effort to realise to the full the intense malignity of hands and feet, of face and form.

'What a picture that girl is,' said a young man, entering the room, to a lady who accompanied him. 'Innocence watching the Serpent. Look at the purity of her forehead.'

'You men are very unobservant,' said the lady in low, sweet tones of bell-like resonance. 'I am much deceived in that face, if it be not "something better than innocent." At any rate, it expresses the innocence of pride that will not, rather than of guilelessness that cannot, know anything of temptation. Pride is stamped upon every feature. Do you not see the haughty arching of the

nose, the magnificence of the brow, the stately manner in which that raven hair is brushed back, and will not condescend to cover so much as the hard edge of it with a curl? Her very pose is as regal as if she were a queen, deciding on the merits or demerits of her prime minister.'

'Speak lower, dear,' he said.

The warning was not unneeded, her dulcet tones were far more penetrating than his own tolerably loud and cheerful voice.

But Althea was not listening; she had forgotten herself for once. A strange procession passed before her. Devils of all ages and descriptions, he-devils and she-devils,—for the Devil's Grandmother from the door of Ratisbon Cathedral led them on—came dancing, skipping, leaping, tumbling, grinning, helter-skelter along the floor. They scrambled up the frame. There was Blake's Devil out of Job.

'Why is he first?' she thought confusedly—'He's not the oldest.'

And even as she thought, he flung himself down with a grand gesture of despair and vanished, not into air, into the Enemy.

The others hung and swung, jeering and leering at her from the corners.

The fantastic creatures of Orcagna, Angelico, Botticelli were there, armed with their little prongs and forks, and Dante's devils came, and those that Luther fancied sitting upon the roof at Worms. After them, Milton's Lucifer flashed swift as black lightning at noon before her. She bowed her head for an instant.

When she looked up he was gone.

Mephistopheles stood in his place, and grinned. He vanished also, and she was left alone with the Enemy.

'All gone,' she said, 'but that one stays. I did not know he was so many.'

It was as if the wickedness of many generations gleamed in the eyes of one.

'We are not children any longer; grotesques have no terror for us. We are not Puritans any longer; we don't think pride and beauty must be cast into the Pit. We are not poets any longer; we don't think Pessimism is revolt against God. And the Devil is dead, and the Foul Fiend, and Satan, but there is left the Enemy. All gone, but that one stays.'

The stuff of which these words are made passed through her mind inarticulately.

'How he clutches his bag of seed! If I had not known, I should have thought it was a miser hugging his gold.'

She rose and went her way, full of thought.

But when she reached the glass doors, and the umbrella stack, she paused. The prospect out of doors was not encouraging by any means. All the pigeons had flown away. The sky was overclouded, and the rain had begun. Worse than all this, she discovered that she had put astray the little bit of metal entitling her to claim her own umbrella.

Now Althea is a person compact of nervous susceptibilities. The state of the weather affects her almost as much as the toothache, or the electric light in a certain house that she knows. She is, in fact, a human barometer, and human barometers in London have a very bad time of it, inasmuch as Set Fair is not a frequent condition of the instrument.

What was she to do? How was she to get back that umbrella? Of all things, she hated speaking to an

official. Nevertheless, an inward conflict took place in her. If she lost that umbrella, she had no spare cash to invest in another.

'But perhaps the man will not believe what I say. And after all, I can send my grandfather for it to-morrow. It won't matter this afternoon.'

Much as she disliked going without it, she disliked making an appeal for it even more. She gazed along the dreary street as piteously as if she were a cat that objected to wetting its feet. As she stood hesitating, she fancied that the two men in charge were looking at her and wondering why. She had the morbid dislike of some unconventional people to appear to be engaged in any action, no matter how trifling, that is not perfectly conventional. There was no help for it. Out she must go. She closed the door at once behind her.

As she went down the dripping pavement, she stared, with desperate longing, at a cab. She had no shillings to fling away, and this is not an age when beauty in distress appeals to the heart of man. Helen herself would have to pay eighteenpence to get across Troy.

II.

Althea's self-esteem sank lower at every step. Her skirt, do what she would with it, was becoming draggled. Her hat was spoiled. Every omnibus going in the direction in which she wished to go was crowded, and she could not breathe in a crowd.

Oh, from what little causes great effects proceed! The fairy fingers of a child may fire a cannon that would have made old Jupiter quake to hear his thunder outroared.

Althea was getting wet, and had no umbrella. There-

fore she cried aloud in a voice of wild, Promethean rebellion against the powers that be. She wanted light, she wanted warmth and wealth and beauty all around, she wanted leisure to occupy herself with herself, she wanted slaves to do her bidding, and to do it silently. In every one there is, counteracting the desire for self-preservation, an innate longing for the poison that would destroy, and she was no exception to the rule. Nor did she strive to quell her longing. She did not feel the comic element in it.

The seriousness of her nature sent the veriest trifles down to the depth of tragedy, and connected them with the sternest issues of life. She never laughed at anything. Had she committed murder, had she been disfigured by the small-pox, she could not have come nearer despair. The gloom of her mind reacted on her physically, and she became conscious of the most intense weariness.

She was on the point of giving up her purpose and returning home, when it struck her with the force of an old conviction renewed by circumstance, that what we do not do to-day we must inevitably do to-morrow. She had no confidence in the future, nor was she in the habit of looking to it to help her out of the present. Rather she dreaded it as a sort of Pharaoh that would compel her, if she did not now make bricks with straw, presently to make bricks without it. She did not live by impulse, and she despised those who could. She reckoned with her taskmaster beforehand, and she perceived that in this instance, if she did not work at once, the reckoning would go against her. So she set her face resolutely, in spite of rain and darkness, towards the goal she had in view.

It was not driving rain, to whip and sting and inform

her with the spirit of resistance; it was the heavy lead-like fall of rain when there is thunder in the distance. It was not the romantic darkness of night in the city, but the monotonous, prosaic soaking out of colour in the day-time, unrelieved by a single star or by so much as a jet of gas in the streets.

Althea's impatience of the intolerable discomfort of it all became so lively that she could not have struggled harder with another person in opposition than she did with herself. For one brief second, on the opposite edge of the road, from a turning that would have led her home, she paused. Then she quickened her pace, and striking down into a side street, came, after a few minutes, to a dingy little jeweller's shop, in the window of which a few old coins and musty silver brooches were displayed.

Twice she walked past the door, and could not make up her mind to enter it, but the third time, with slow and lingering steps, she did so.

A dwarfed and swarthy man sat working in the window. He knew that she had passed. He had an eye for beauty. Each time, so soon as she had gone beyond him, he lifted his eyes, letting them fall again directly she turned round. It was not the first time he had seen her. The instant she crossed the threshold, he became absorbed in his work.

A mirror hung upon the wall in front of him, and he was thus enabled to watch her movements without appearing to do so.

She seated herself and waited quietly.

He took no notice of her.

Becoming impatient, she moved her chair, so that it made a noise upon the ground.

He raised his eyebrows slightly as he bent still lower over the diamond ring on which he was engaged.

He was determined to hear her voice before he moved, and presently he heard it.

'Is Signor Brunetti at home? Can I speak to him?'

Brunetti rose leisurely, put the ring into a box with great deliberation, settled the nest of cotton wool round it, unfastened and folded up the apron that he wore. Nervous though she might be, Althea was not altogether impatient; so soon as she felt sure that she had arrested his attention, she was soothed rather than irritated by watching these manœuvres. As he came opposite her on the other side of the counter, his eyes had a dull gleam in them like some of the jewels that he set.

'Giacomo Brunetti is at your service, Madam.'

Spite of his ugly diminutive form, the jeweller spoke with the graceful action and in the gracious speech of one not born in an island where courtesy is held to be effeminate. Insensibly she liked his deference. She preferred to be called 'Madam' because it had a more euphonious echo than 'Miss.' Homage delicate enough not to offend her fastidiousness was always grateful. But she was too much taken up with the affair in hand to care about prolonging this pleasure.

'I do not wish to speak here,' she said, as she glanced furtively at the window looking to the street. 'Is there no private room?'

'Madam does me too great an honour in condescending to use it.'

He drew aside a dusty, red *portière* at the other end of the shop, and opened a door behind.

As she paused on the threshold, she was struck with a sound as of tiny aerial hammers, smiting the air all

round her. It was only the ticking of fifty or sixty clocks, clocks of all sizes, shapes, and periods, that covered walls and floor. An eight-day clock stood in one corner; over the face of it there was engraved in brass the legend *tempus fugit*. Fir cones swung to and fro in soft and even undulation. Hobgoblins were clinging to the end of golden chains, their ruddy cheeks under their peaked red heads puffed out with these perpetual gymnastics. A cuckoo opened the door of the wooden cottage wherein he lived, and called the quarter just above her head; a silvery chime rang from a silvery tower; a trumpeter in scarlet walked out of a castle gate, and, blowing one blast of shrill, cock-like defiance, straightway retreated; two giants, about the height of a finger, struck with their clubs the bell of a cathedral built for fairies.

She could not help smiling.

'What is that?' she said, taking the seat he placed for her beside a table near the door, in the centre of which stood a specimen of goldsmith's work, the dainty form of which was obvious even to eyes so inexperienced as hers.

The goldsmith shrugged his shoulders. 'You are pleased?'

'I have never seen anything more beautiful. But I do not understand the design.'

Brunetti laughed noiselessly.

'It is but an imitation. And yet in some sort it comes straight from the hands of the great master of our craft and of other crafts besides ours. It is of the same age. Let him describe it in his own words.'

So saying, Brunetti unlocked a drawer in the table, and took out a silver casket, richly chased with Cupids.

Within it lay a book bound in ivory, with a carbuncle at each of the four corners. The restless light in the stones flashed hither and thither as he held it. It seemed to open of itself at the place that he wanted, for he began to read aloud at once. 'Agreeable to the account already given of the model, I had represented the sea and the earth both in a sitting posture, the legs of one placed between those of the other, as certain arms of the sea enter the land, and certain necks of the land jut out into the sea. The manner in which I designed them was as follows: I put a trident into the right hand of the figure that represented the sea, and in the left a bark of exquisite workmanship, which was to hold the salt; under this figure were its four sea-horses, the form of which in the breast and forefeet resembled that of a horse, and all the hind part from the middle that of a fish; the fishes' tails were entwined with each other in a manner very pleasing to the eye, and the whole group was placed in a striking attitude. This figure was surrounded by a variety of fishes of different species and other sea animals. The undulation of the water was properly exhibited, and likewise enamelled with its true colours. The earth I represented by a beautiful female figure holding a cornucopia in her hand, entirely naked, like the male figure; in her left hand she held a little temple, the architecture of the Ionic order and the workmanship very nice; this was intended to put the pepper in. Under this female figure I exhibited most of the forest animals which the earth produces, and the rocks I partly enamelled and partly left in gold. I then fixed the work on a base of black ebony of a proper thickness; and then I placed four golden figures in more than mezzo-relievo; these were intended to represent Morning, Noon, Evening, and

Night. There were also four other figures of the four principal winds, of the same size, the workmanship and enamel of which were elegant to the last degree.'

Brunetti turned back to the title-page, and showed Althea the portrait of Benvenuto Cellini.

There was something inexpressibly congenial to her in the mobile, mischievous face of the artist, as he looked back over his shoulder out of the wild age of the Renaissance, out of those fathomless depths of humanity which, to us, appear almost inhuman. She drew the salt-cellar towards her, and let her fingers rest upon the head of Night. She was in touch with all the brilliant Court that once had sat at table and applauded. She saw the King, magnificent and debonnair, the splendid Lords and Ladies in bright apparel. She revelled in the new fancying of the boundless luxury and pride that could employ the foremost genius of its time to design its meanest utensils.

'Delightful!' she said involuntarily.

'And yet the man was a perfect devil,' observed Brunetti.

She shrank at the sound of the word.

Again, as he glanced up at her, those eyes flashed the hard gleaming of a gem. She wished she had not left the shop. The thought recalled to her the business about which she had come. She unclasped a bracelet that she was wearing and held it towards him.

'I want to dispose of that,' she said shortly. 'How much would you give me for it?'

He took the bracelet in his hand, and examined it closely. It was made of gold, where the band was broadest four stones were set—an emerald, a ruby, an opal, a sapphire.

'I have been told they make a word,' she said, 'but I do not know what it is.'

'An *e*, an *r*, an *o*, an *s*, the word is Ἔρως,'[1] he said promptly.

'What does that mean?'

'I cannot tell you.'

Again she did not like his manner.

'You knew the word,' she said.

'It is often given us to engrave, but we are poor, unlearned artisans. The letter of it for us, the spirit for those we serve!'

'How much is it worth?' she repeated.

'Nothing at all.'

'You will not take it then?' she spoke with some eagerness.

He touched the stones one by one thoughtfully, and seemed to pause.

'The stones are not of any value. All I can do is to weigh it and give you the worth of the gold which I could melt and use.'

'Weigh it!' she said, with an imperious gesture.

He fetched a pair of scales, and did so cautiously twice over.

'I will allow you £5 for this bracelet just as it is.'

She was disappointed but would not show it. 'Madam desires to exchange it for some other ornament, doubtless?' he inquired.

'I do not want to exchange the bracelet for another. I want the money.'

'In that case I regret to be obliged to tell Madam that I can only have the pleasure of offering her four pound ten shillings.'

[1] Love.

'Very well. Give me the money at once.'

The goldsmith appeared surprised. He crossed to the other side of the apartment, and turning his back on her, opened a tall desk that stood in one corner, and began to rummage among the contents.

'The room is very hot,' she said to herself, and rising noiselessly, she set the door half open, returning to her seat with stealthy, fast steps so that Brunetti did not perceive she had stirred.

Some one else did, however.

This was a young man who had entered the shop a few minutes before, and was waiting until such time as the master of it should reveal himself. The sudden opening of the door, as he leant over the counter examining some trinket he had a mind to buy, shot through a ray of sunshine that startled him. Following the ray in its passage, his eyes fell on the mirror, and there he saw reflected the girl whom he had only a short time since admired at the Guildhall.

The rain had ceased as suddenly as it began, and the poignant light of the sun, when it is nearing the West, smote straight upon her. She appeared to him like the pale, resplendent vision of warfare. Her shadowy hair was yet more beautiful against the crimson wings of cloud behind. Her deep eyes caused to glow in him the high enthusiasm of one who sees in strife only the making of victory. Quickly she fastened the bracelet upon her slender wrist, and raised it reverently, as it were, to her lips; more quickly still she unclasped it and laid it on the table before her.

The master of the shop returned, and counted down some money. The young man waiting was offended. Between deformity and beauty what a strange link was

this! Nevertheless he watched the mirror with unfailing interest. The girl dropped the money, coin by coin, into her purse, and rose to go. As she did so, the man spoke, clutching his bargain.

'You have bought the knowledge. Shall I tell you the meaning of the word now?'

She shook her head.

He laid his hand upon her arm.

Perhaps the spectator of the scene could hardly have explained to any one why this action sent through him a shudder of disgust.

'Hullo!' he shouted. 'Is anybody coming?'

The vision broke and fled on either side of the mirror.

Althea swept past him, the faintest flush upon her cheek.

The little goldsmith stood behind the counter, and made a courteous gesture of the head that would not have misbecome a noble.

'Give me the bracelet that lady sold to you,' he said impetuously.

'What bracelet?' asked the goldsmith, feigning astonishment.

'The bracelet that is lying on the table in there.'

He pointed to the door.

'My kind patron is in this instance mistaken. I did not buy it from the lady. It is a very valuable piece of work. I was but showing her a detail of the construction if, for one moment, the gentleman will permit me.'

He sidled towards the door, but his interlocutor was too swift for him, and laid hands on the bracelet before he had crossed the threshold.

'There!' said he, contemptuously throwing a cheque

already signed upon the counter. 'Good afternoon, don't tell more lies than you can help!'

He hurried out of the shop.

The goldsmith looked at the cheque, saw that it was one for a hundred pounds, payable at Child's Bank, and chuckled.[1]

[1] This story was never finished, nor is there any clue as to how the author meant to develop it.

[1898]

THE FRIENDLY FOE [1]

'Not for a moment,' said the Count, with great dignity, 'did I suppose so.'

I thanked him.

He pressed my hand.

There followed one of those awkward pauses which are apt to follow on a supreme moment. He had just informed me that he did not for an instant suppose that I preferred any consideration before honour. The wind was driving the rain against my window as if it were a human thing that must be chased from the wide world without. The flames were leaping up the chimney, as if they owned some kinship with the wind and were rushing to meet him. I wanted to be alone, to enjoy the uproar in peace. How to get rid of the Count I did not know. Why the Count insisted on staying, I did not know. As he was going to shoot me, or I was going to shoot him, at eight o'clock the next morning, it seemed to me that this was waste of time; but you cannot make a remark of that kind to a guest, and he happened to be in my room.

'Let me ask you one thing!' said the Count. 'You are a generous enemy. Though not in your first youth, you are younger than I am, and you have not been out before. I would not take you at a disadvantage. Do you believe in the soul's future?

[1] From *The Cornhill*, March 1898.

'A most unnecessary question,' I said lightly. 'In a few hours one of us will have answered it for good and all.'

He frowned.

'You do not believe in it. I am reduced to a most unpleasant extremity. Unless you can reassure me upon this point, it is impossible for me to fight you. Unless I fight you, I am dishonoured.'

'Why should it be impossible?' I asked. But that the Count was by birth and breeding a perfect gentleman I might have suspected his courage.

'It gives me an unfair advantage,' he said, gazing steadily at me out of his deep-set eyes. 'You fight, believing death is death. I fight, believing death is birth. I know something of your chivalrous nature. If I kill you, I, in my own opinion, set free a soul. If you kill me, you, in your own opinion, commit murder. I would not have you tortured in after life by this reflection. Once more I tell you, it is impossible for me to fight unless you give me some assurance. Once more I ask you, Do you believe in eternal life?'

'I am fully sensible of your kind consideration for my feelings, but permit me to observe that I do not see what right you have to ask that question.'

'You decline to answer it?'

'I do.'

'Then our affair is settled. I also decline to fight.'

He bowed, and walked towards the door.

'Stay!' I cried. 'What are you going to do?'

He laid his hand upon a pistol.

'No,' I said. 'Why?'

'You leave me no other choice.'

It was absurd of me to object to his shooting himself

when I had no objection whatever to shooting him with my own hand if I could. But it was just this one phrase *if I could* that made a difference. The alternative was too cold-blooded; I felt bound to prevent it.

'Could it not be arranged——?' I spoke nervously, only to gain time, in the confusion of the moment.

'You are not the man I took you for,' he said.

This time he did not bow as he turned towards the door.

'You do not seem to be aware,' I remarked, 'that you are exposing me to a sense of blood-guiltiness far more onerous than that which you deprecate. If I am to be a murderer, at least allow me to feel that I did the deed myself, not that I compelled some one else to do it. Do you think that you are treating me fairly? You put a premium upon lies. You leave no other course open to me. By all that is held most sacred I swear to you that I believe in eternal life.'

And rising, I laid my hand upon my heart.

'Sir,' said the Count sternly, 'would you die with a falsehood on your lip? You do not believe it?'

'No,' I said, 'I do not. I merely wished to show you to what extremes you are driving me. But you are right. Between gentlemen this sort of thing is a mistake, even in jest. You do not leave this room till you have promised to fight me to-morrow!' and I threw myself across the door. I was the younger and the stronger man.

With perfect gravity the Count sat down in an armchair. The wind was howling more loudly than before; the flames had sunk lower.

I became conscious of the absurdity of the situation. Nothing short of flood, fire, or earthquake could put an

end to it in a fitting manner. There we were bound to stay till we died of starvation, unless one or the other would compromise his dignity. As the little I knew of the Count made me feel certain that nothing would ever induce him to compromise his, I compromised mine.

'Count,' I said, 'this is a ridiculous position for both of us. My presence causes you an intolerable *gêne*, and yours, the whole night through, would scarcely be agreeable to me. Let us consider the thing dispassionately. You will not fight me because I do not hold an opinion which you, rightly or wrongly, hold to be necessary for my future happiness, if I live; *i.e.* you do not object to kill me, because you think no one can die, but you do object to poison the remainder of my mortal existence. If you do not fight me, you will shoot yourself, for you would be unable to survive your honour. That is the case on your side. Now for mine. I have an instinctive dislike of suicide, either for myself or for any one else whom I respect. It may be a mere prejudice, but so it is. If, therefore, you blow out your brains, it will seriously affect my peace of mind, inasmuch as I shall consider myself to a certain extent responsible. But fair fight is another thing altogether. It is now five o'clock. According to our agreement we meet at eight to-morrow morning. I shall need at least five hours' sleep beforehand, or I shall not take steady aim. Allowing full time to dress, breakfast, and get to the *rendez-vous*, I ought not to go to bed later than two. Between five o'clock this evening and two to-morrow morning there are nine hours. Now, these nine hours I will promise you, on my word of honour as a gentleman, to spend on the investigation of a question that does

not interest me in the least, and on which, but for you, I should never, in the whole course of my life, have spent nine minutes—if you, on your part, will promise to meet me at eight to-morrow. If, by that time, I can answer your question in the affirmative—and I know already that it is not by words alone that you will judge whether I speak the truth—well and good! Let us fight! Whichever way the duel ends, you will have the satisfaction of thinking that I have gained a belief which, but for you, I should not even have wished to gain. If, on the contrary, I retain my present scepticism, we will shoot ourselves instead of each other. *Voilà tout!* It is a pity: the country will lose two possible defenders instead of one, but I do not see how that can be helped. Is it a bond? Will you meet me at eight?

The Count rose from his chair: his eyes shone.

'I have the greatest pleasure in accepting your generous proposal,' he replied, 'more especially as I am quite convinced that no one could study this question for nine hours without answering it as I myself have been taught to answer it. As for the method of study, that of course must be left to yourself. The "Phaidon" of Plato'

'No,' I said carelessly, moving away from the door to let him pass. 'My tastes are not philosophical. I shall sit by the fire for three hours, and think it over in my own way. (I dare not engage that my mind will not wander to other subjects. La Girouette danced adorably in the ballet last night.) Then, if you have no objection, I shall dine out and go to a ball, the invitation for which I accepted some time ago, so that my absence would be remarked: and, when the clock strikes eleven, I shall betake myself to my confessor. If serious

reflection, if the sight of the vanities of this world, if the consolation of religion, all put together, cannot persuade me to believe in the immortality of the soul, it will be a hopeless affair indeed; for I am sure nothing else could.'

The Count sighed.

'It is a strange way to take,' he said; 'but let no man judge for another. I myself was led to believe by a series of events which, to any other than myself, would appear almost incredible. I pray that you may be rightly directed. In the meantime I wish you good-night. I shall not retire to rest before two o'clock.' He bowed again and went out.

When he was gone I threw myself down in the chair which he had occupied, that I might enjoy to the full the luxury of being alone. The Count's presence had become a hideous oppression to me during the last quarter of an hour. I had felt as if he would never go —as if he were a nightmare, as if he were the Old Man of the Sea, as if he were a whole crowd of people in himself, and made the room stuffy. I ran to the window and flung it open; the wind rushed in and puffed the curtains out, and rioted amongst my books and papers, bathing me, body and soul, in freedom. I heaped up faggot after faggot, and stirred them into a blaze that might have set the chimney on fire. Then, between wind and flame, down I sat, according to contract, to consider that part of myself which was more subtle than either.

I found it to the full as difficult as I had expected. The old arguments were no newer. 'We should like to go on living very much. Therefore we think we shall. But as we really do not know, we will not die till the

last possible moment.' They came to little more than that, so it seemed. As I was without this strong prepossession in favour of life, I failed to recognise their cogency. Besides, to have that man going on for ever? I had a strong prepossession in favour of his extinction, even if it necessarily included my own. I loved myself less than I hated him. Not that I had any reason to hate him. He was everything that he should be, which gave a sort of zest to my abhorrence, reduced it to a fine art—made it essential, not a mere accident. Our natures were antagonistic. I could have forgiven another for murdering me more easily than I could forgive him the fact of his existence in the same universe with myself. He jarred upon my every nerve. My eyes rebelled at the sight of his face, my ears at the sound of his voice, the touch of his hand caused an electric shiver of repulsion. He annihilated all but the animal part of me; when he was in the room I knew his dog had more of a soul than I. And, by the strangest freak of fancy, it was this man who, more than any one I ever met, had the faculty of conjuring anything like it out of me, who insisted not only on my believing it was there, but that it would go on being there for ever and ever.

'No, Count,' I said, as I watched the sparks go up the chimney; 'keep your immortality to yourself! I would not share it with you for the asking,' and through my mind there flashed the old emblems of the transitoriness of life—the dream, the shadow, the morning mist, the snowflake, the flower of the grass, the bird flying out of the darkness, through the lighted hall, into the darkness again. I was reassured concerning its momentary character. 'And yet,' I said to myself, 'the Count has a very strong will. If any man had the power to insist

on living, in defiance of all the rules of Nature, that man would be the Count. Perhaps it is his excessive vitality which is burdensome to ephemeral creatures like myself. It is as if he absorbed their proper part whenever he came near them.'

So thinking, I took out my pistols and cleaned them, not without a certain pleasure. I had had enough of my own society by the time the clock struck eight, and was well inclined to seek that of others.

The dinner to which I was invited was given by Princess X., who lived in an apartment on the third floor of the Hotel Z. She was going to a dance that night—the same that I meant to attend—and the party beforehand would be, she informed me, quite a small one, consisting only of myself and a few intimates. It so happened that I was rather late. Seeing the door of the lift open, I got in. The darkness had prevented me from noticing that in one corner there was already something that looked like a downy ball of white, with a very small head coming out of it. I would fain have beaten a retreat, but it was too late; the porter stepped in after me and we began to ascend.

'Oh!' said the little lady, with a gasp, putting out a small white hand to catch hold of me. I am afraid that I did not attempt to reassure her. It was all over in a minute.

The lift stopped. I made way for her to get out. She turned round to me, smiling and blushing.

'I beg your pardon,' she said, 'I never have been in one before. It is so unlike anything else—when you are not accustomed. I suppose you also are going to dine with *Marraine*?'

'I have not the pleasure of calling the Princess X.

Marraine,' I replied; 'but if she has the pleasure of calling you her godchild, we are bound for one destination. Allow me to ring the bell.'

As she passed into the hall, the clearer light shone, for a moment, on her soft brown curls, and glanced, reflected, in her mirthful eyes.

We entered the drawing-room almost at the same moment. As the Princess rose to make us acquainted, she laughed again and said quickly:

'No, no, Marraine, it is too late. I was introduced by the lift, as the greatest coward this gentleman has ever known, quite three minutes ago.'

The Princess took her hand.

'Well! well!' she said, 'was there ever such a naughty débutante? It is a pity, as you took each other up so pleasantly, that you cannot take each other down also. But there I must interfere.'

'It is cruel of you, Princess. Fate was much kinder. But,'—I turned to the younger lady—'may I presume to ask your hand for the first dance?'

'You may,' she said merrily; 'but I hope you know what you are asking. It is the first dance that I have ever given any one.'

'Where is your father?' asked the Princess.

'Kept at home by a letter from the Prime Minister. He begs that you will excuse him; for nothing else would he have given up this party. He is coming later on, to take me home. I hope he will not come till very late indeed, if that is all he cares for. He did not feel sure that it was meet for me to go out to dinner alone, even to the house of my godmother, but he said that he did not want to disappoint you, and I think,' she put in candidly, though very demurely, 'he did not want to

disappoint me either. I should have died of vexation if I had had to stay at home.'

The Princess laughed.

'That makes it serious. And seriously, my love, you are quite right. Unless one is dead or dying, one should keep one's dinner engagement. And, while I think of it,' she added, addressing herself to me, 'I must positively engage you to dine with me to-morrow. I expect the Prime Minister, and I cannot be left alone to entertain him. Eight o'clock, do you hear? He will have to leave early, so mind you are in time.'

'To hear is to obey. Unless I am dead or dying I will keep my dinner engagement.'

'I think I am sure of you then. You never looked better in your life.'

'Dinner is on the table,' said the Princess's butler.

The ground floor of the hotel had been engaged for the dance. The fiddles were already striking up when I, in company with the other gentlemen of the party, entered the room. My promised partner was standing beside the Princess, busily inscribing the names of various aspirants on her card. I thought she might be better employed inscribing mine, and said so. She gave me the card, and I availed myself of the vacant spaces that appeared on it.

'Quick, quick!' she cried. 'There is the music! Are you not longing to be off?'

Dancing varies inversely as the character of the lady who dances. With her it resembled nothing so much as flight. She scarcely seemed to touch the ground with her feet, she was as light as one of the feathers on her cloak. The music mounted to my brain as we went whirling round and round together. I felt as though I

were a spirit chasing another spirit. I forgot everything else, and when it stopped I could not have told whether we had been dancing hours or moments. I had begun in another state of existence.

'Ah!' she said, 'your step goes well with mine.'

How I filled up the intervals when I was not dancing with her I do not know. Once, while we were standing together in the recess formed by a window, a great moth flew in and made for the lighted candelabra over our heads. There was a quick change in her.

'O save it, save it!' she cried, clasping her little hands together in wild distress.

I caught the creature in my handkerchief and let it out again. When I returned to her she was pale and trembling.

'He is quite safe,' I said. 'Do not be unhappy! After all, what would it matter if he did burn himself? In proportion, he would have lived much longer than we shall.'

'No, no,' she said. 'We live for ever.'

Her words sent a thrill of recollection through me.

'Do we?' I said in a gentler voice. 'If you tell me so, I will believe it.'

'Why yes, of course we do!' she said. 'I never heard any one say that we did not. Shall we finish this dance?'

It was the last opportunity that I had of talking to her. I think I was engaged in conversation with some one else when, later on in the evening, I heard her pleading tones close behind me.

'Only one more! O let me stay for only one more!'

In an instant she was at my side.

'I must go,' she said. 'I must have one more dance before I go. I do not know where my partner is.'

It was irresistible, though I had a humiliating sensation that she asked me only because there was no one else at hand. She broke away just when the delirium of enjoyment was at its height.

'No longer!' she cried. 'Not a moment more! That was perfect. Good-night!'

She made me a tricksy sign of adieu with her fan, and tripped away; she could hardly help dancing as she moved.

I stood bewildered for a moment, then rushed to the door that I might see her as she passed to her carriage. She was leaning on her father's arm as she went down the steps. The link-man raised his torch to guide them, and a sudden glare of light showed me the features of the Count.

I drew a long breath.

'It is as well that I am going to fight that man to-morrow,' I thought. 'If not, he would inevitably have been my father-in-law. In the first place, I have not enough to marry upon; in the second, we should have made the little thing miserable between us.'

The wind detached a fragment of her swansdown cloak. I stooped and picked it up.

Practically speaking, the disposition of my time had been in no degree influenced by the Count's grotesque requirement. I had intended all along to stay at home until eight o'clock, to dine with the Princess X., to go to the dance, and to visit the dearest friend that I had in the world. He was a Dominican monk, of great learning and acuteness, resident in the monastery of S. Petrox, about half a mile off. We were old schoolfellows, and,

though our ways of life were very different, he had never lost the ascendency over me which, as a boy, he had understood how to gain.

He was busy reading when I entered his cell; he laid his finger on his lips, to show me that I must not interrupt him.

After a long pause, he closed the great volume reverently and asked me what I wanted at that time of night.

'I want an immortal soul.'

'Curious!' he remarked, pushing his spectacles up on his forehead, 'I have just been studying the question of the soul.'

'Well! what is the result of your investigations?'

'My friend,' returned the Dominican, 'what would it avail were I to tell you? I know your mind upon these subjects.'

'That is more than I know myself, then—more than I should ever have wished to know but for a strange occurrence.'

I told him all the circumstances of my conversation with the Count,—not mentioning his name, of course.

'You have helped me at many a difficult pass before now,' I said. 'Help me again. Pour out the contents of that great volume upon my head!'

'You would be as wise as you were before. I know you, *amico mio*. You own no teacher save experience.'

'What is the experience that can make a man believe in that of which he has none? Tell me, that I may seek it.'

'Is there any one in the world of whom you are really fond?' said the Dominican.

For the fraction of a second I hesitated.

'Forgive the question! It is of no importance. There is one way by which you can be brought to believe, but it *may* cost you your life. Are you willing to risk it?'

'I am bound to preserve my life until to-morrow morning.'

'So far I can guarantee it, if you are careful to obey. For the rest, you are indifferent? Well and good! Understand that I, on my part, am running a great risk for your sake. If what I am about to do were to become known, I should incur excommunication. My fellow-churchmen would say that I was endangering a soul within the fold to save one that is without. So be it! You are my friend. You are, I know, an actor of some experience. Do you think that you could personate me?'

'With your instructions, I have no doubt that I could.'

He rose, and took from his cupboard a priest's robe and a little cap.

'You have just recovered from an illness; you must wear a *beretta*. You are close shaven; that is well. Under the *beretta* your hair is not too long. Be sure to recollect that you are still subject to cold—that you must on no account take it off. Before we go any further, oblige me by taking an oath—a solemn oath. First, that, whatever may happen, you will attempt no resistance; secondly, that you will never reveal the names of those amongst whom I am going to send you, nor any of the circumstances which you may be called upon to witness. Before you swear, reflect! The possession of a secret of this kind implies considerable danger. Is it worth the risk?'

'A strange question for one of your calling to ask!' I retorted; 'I am no priest, but I think it is.'

'Is there anything in the world that you hold sacred?' said the Dominican.

I drew the bit of swansdown from its resting-place, profaning the one true sentiment that was in me with a laugh. As for my friend, he never even smiled.

'That will do!' he said. 'Swear upon that!' I did so.

'You are now a penitent before me. I have heard your confession. I am about to absolve you. Take accurate note of everything that I say, and reproduce my words, as nearly as you can, when you are called in to the death-bed.'

'You spoke to me as if I were a woman,' I observed, when he had finished.

'You are quite right,' said the monk. 'Now let us reverse the parts. Do you absolve me, as if I were a woman!'

'I repeated the form of words which he had just gone through.

'*Evviva!*' he said, when I had done. 'You might have been born in a cassock.'

At the same moment I heard the hooting of an owl in the garden below. He started, and looked at the clock.

'Late!' he said. 'That is the carriage. We have not a moment to lose. Let me recommend you to keep silence from the time you leave these doors to the time when you are set down again. If you say a word more than is necessary, I will not answer for the consequences. I shall await you here on your return. Remember your oath. Then, bending forward

as if he feared the very walls would hear, he added in a whisper:

'*Take no refreshment in that house.*'

He touched the back of a volume of the *Via Media* as he spoke; part of what had appeared to be the book-case sprang open and disclosed a winding stair. Without another word, he pointed down it, taking a light to show me the way. At the last turn of the steps he left me.

I felt the cold breath of the night lifting my hair. Then I was suddenly seized and blindfolded; whether by two or more persons I could not be sure, for I was taken by surprise in the darkness. Determined to adhere to the prescribed conditions of the adventure, I made no sound and I heard a whisper:

'No need to gag him, he has his cue.'

In a moment strong arms had lifted me and were carrying me along—over the grass, as I judged, for there was no ring of footsteps. I was let down gently enough upon the seat of a carriage, and away we went like the wind. How long it took, which way we went, whether there was any one else in the carriage, I have no idea. A steady hand must have held the reins. We were going at a breakneck pace, yet we never encountered the smallest obstacle, nor did I even feel a jolt. Thus was I whirled along through the night, as little able to see as if I had been sleeping.

We stopped at last. I was helped out, and guided, as I judged by the mouldy smell, into some cellar or disused passage, at the end of which there were steps. Presumably, they led up into a house, for when we trod on level ground again, the atmosphere was dry and warm, and, to my great surprise, I heard the tones of a

piano in the distance, familiar tones at the sound of which my heart beat, though it was a minute before I recollected that I had heard them last as I was leaving the ball-room. We went up many stairs, down many more and up again, the sounds growing more and more distinct as we advanced. They ceased abruptly, the bandage was removed, and I found myself standing alone in a tiny room, lit by one small red-shaded lamp. I tried the door, but it was locked; mysterious, for I had heard no turning of the key! A piano stood open, but there was no music upon it. A book lay on the sofa, as if some one had just tossed it down there. On the outer side there was no window at all; in the other wall was a recess, formed by three little windows of painted glass, through which a light from below shone dimly, by way of the Madonna and two attendant saints.

I waited a long time, but no one came. The stillness grew oppressive. I threw myself on the sofa, and tried to read, but the air was heated and magnetic—it seemed to thrust itself between me and the lines. I looked at the first page of the book to see if there were any indication of the owner, but there was none. I then tried several others, all with the same ill success. Clearly they had been read with much affection, for they were often marked with a pencil: but there was never any name in the beginning, and from one or two of them the fly-leaf had been removed.

On a sudden the light reflected from below went out; the saints became indistinguishable.

My curiosity got the better of me. I resolved, come what would, to open one of those windows; to have nothing but a pane of glass between me and the unknown was too strong a temptation. I pressed with all my

strength against the woodwork of the centre one: there was a slight, a very slight, yielding; it seemed to give on darkness. I moved the lamp cautiously, so as to concentrate its beams upon the chink, and pressed again. For an instant I caught sight of the dark figure of a man, bending over a table, in front of a fireplace, far down below. Then the window gave an ominous creak. I closed it, and sat breathless. Whether the man had heard? I inclined to think that he must have. Presently there were footsteps outside.

'In half an hour,' said a man's voice.

'In half an hour,' said a woman's.

It was music echoing a discord. The key turned in the lock; the little lady of the swansdown cloak entered, and shut the door behind her. I cannot now conceive my feelings at that moment; but I had just presence of mind enough to recollect that I should be turned out if I did not sustain my part. We saluted each other in the usual way, and she knelt down before me. For the first time it darted through my mind that she was going to make a confession—and to me? A strong repugnance to hear overcame every other consideration. If I could mock that creature, I must be a fiend incarnate. Yet how, with safety to my friend—and to myself—prevent her? I took a step backward. She raised her eyes appealingly. I frowned and turned away.

'This is some jest,' I said sternly. 'I was sent for to attend a deathbed. Take me to the penitent.'

'It is I that am dying.'

'Are you mad?' I demanded. 'Many a time have I seen death; never with eyes and cheeks like these.'

'He that has not an hour to live is no nearer death than I am. I shall not see the sun rise to-morrow.'

She spoke with such conviction that I staggered back, reeling under the shock.

'You are ill,' she said solicitously, rising from her knees. 'Holy Virgin, what shall I do? Help! help!'

I summoned all the strength of mind that I possessed.

'Do not call, my daughter! It is only a passing weakness. The way hither is long. I am but lately recovered from a severe indisposition. Let me rest!'

Some excuse of this kind I think I made. Whatever it was, she accepted it, and stood watching me for a minute or two. Then, seeing that I was better, she said, with great gentleness:

'It was not good to send you out on such a wild night as this. You should have stayed at home and slept. It grieved me so to see that I have made you ill. I did not think of this when I asked my father to send for a priest. I have hardly ever been allowed one, but you are very like some one that I have seen—I cannot feel as if you were a stranger. I could believe anything that you said—I know I could. Are you glad to think how greatly it comforts me to see you?'

'I would give the remnant of my years, if that could be of any service to you,' I said, striving not to say it too fervently.

She was quiet for a moment;—then, drawing a chair close to the sofa on which I had fallen back, she resumed.

'I will not weary you with making a long confession. I think I can say what is on my mind better like this. I trust your face.'

She hesitated.

'It is a dreadful thing. At first I thought I dared not say it to any one. It was wicked of me even to think it.'

She hid her face.

'But you, you are older; you may not have very long to live either. Things look so different then. If you said it, I could believe it. I know I could.'

Once more she hesitated. The wind had risen again in all its fury, and was howling outside the window.

'Satan tempts us,' she said.

'Yes,' I said. 'Satan tempts us.'

She turned her face away, clasped her hands tightly, and went on.

'I do not know how to say it. It was like this. I was at a dance, and very happy. I think I never was so happy in my life. I never danced with any one before. There came a moth, and it was going to burn itself. He saved it; and then he said, "What matter if it had died, for we were all like moths." There is nothing more.'

'He told a lie.'

'I knew it, I knew it,' she said. 'Say that! Look at me as you say it! Say: "I believe we live again."'

'I believe that we live again,' I said solemnly, answering her gaze with perfect truthfulness. The anguish passed away; the strained hands loosened. She bent her head and closed her eyes. When she spoke again, she said in a whisper: 'It is all well. How good of you to come! He said he would believe it, if I told him. I could not tell him. He made me feel as if I did not know. If I could only—will you say this to him for me? Ah, no! I forgot. You must never tell any one.'

'You shall tell him yourself.'

A light, first of wonder, then of the happiness of those who see a vision, dawned in her eyes. I was still half in heaven with her, when the Count entered. She told him that I had been ill—that I ought not to have come out at night.

'I am greatly obliged to you for your kindness.' The Count addressed himself to me with a graceful, though condescending bow. 'The Abbot is informed of the reasons for which secrecy is imperative,' he continued. I feel sure that you will hold me excused. But we must not suffer you to go hence without a draught of wine.' His daughter went before him.

I followed, down the dark staircase into a hall—the same evidently as that into which I had peeped from the window of the boudoir. It lay in darkness now; even the fire burned low. The Count carried a lamp.

Strange figures, stranger faces, met my eyes. Goat-footed creatures were driving airy chariots over my head; Cupids and Fauns and things half man, half beast or bird, were at their wildest revelry around me. Here stood *l'homme armé*, his visor up, nothing but vacant blackness behind it. There, two colossal heads, man and woman, leered at each other. Garlands of carved fruit and flowers, amidst which squirrels, monkeys, and little owls were playing, wreathed pillar and post of the staircase by which we had come down. No two were alike.

In front of the fire stood a table; on it a tray of polished brass, holding a flask of fine Venetian work and some glasses.

He seated himself in silence. I did the same.

A French clock on its bracket struck, or rather tolled, an hour after midnight.

Lifting his dark eyes, the Count fixed them steadily upon me.

I feared his recognition too much to meet them, for he and I had looked each other in the eyes once before. It is impossible to mask the soul when she is sitting at her open windows. But he had no suspicion.

'In the course of your life,' he said, 'you have, no doubt, seen many strange things.' He waved his head in the direction of the grotesques. 'Did you ever, if I may ask the question, see a house furnished in this way before?'

'Never.'

'Could it have been so furnished by any reasonable man?'

'A poet?' I said tentatively.

The Count shrugged his shoulders.

'There are no poets in the family.'

I kept silence.

'The man shot himself. His son built the little room up above. It has no window to the front. There his wife lived until her death.'

He glanced up at a portrait on the wall, the features of which strongly resembled his own.

'No one knows what became of him.'

As he spoke, he pulled a silk tassel which hung by a long slender cord from the ceiling. A thousand lights flashed out. The heart of every carven rose became a heart of flame, stars glowed among the vine and pomegranate, eyes of fire shone from the grotesque heads. The lights, the faces, the flowers and fruit all round wreathed themselves into the first letter of the name of my enemy. Everywhere it was written. A wave of fresh, vigorous hate surged over me.

'Have you ever seen an apartment lighted in this manner before?' he asked.

'I must confess that it appears to me fantastic, though very beautiful.'

'We were not speaking of the effect, I think. It is unusual?'

'Certainly.'

'The invention is due to the father of the present owner. He fell by his own hand.'

'And the present owner?' I said.

The Count's expression changed. He looked at his daughter, who had seated herself on a low couch by the fire. She did not appear to be listening; but he lowered his voice.

'The present owner has one child—now in the flower of her youth. She does not know the dreadful fate of her ancestors. She has only been told thus much—that at the age of seventeen she will pass into another life. She feels no fear, since she is going to the mother whom, as a babe, she lost. Of the exact moment and manner of her death she has been kept in ignorance until within an hour of it. Nothing has frightened, nothing has distressed her. Pure and unspotted as she came to him, he that best loves her desires to send her back to that heaven which is more real to her than earth, to that heaven which will save her from knowing—as, but for him, she must infallibly know—that this earth is a hell. Is he right?'

'No,' I said, with a certain assurance. 'He is mad.' The Count started; but on the instant he was calm again.

'That makes the fifth generation,' he said, as if to himself. 'In the eyes of ignorant persons he may be

mad perhaps. Is it not the truest sanity to prevent these horrors from culminating in a sixth? I cannot but approve his judgment.'

He turned towards the girl. She raised her face to his. I saw that it was white as marble. I thought that she was going to faint. Instinctively I seized the flask and poured out some of the wine.

'Well thought of!' said the Count. 'The Church, however, comes first—even before a lady.'

He made a sign to her.

'You need refreshment more than I,' she said, offering me the glass.

I took it from her, not thinking what I did. And yet some word of hers recalled a word spoken before.

'Refreshment!'

Take no refreshment in that house.

I had but tasted. For the moment my senses still were clear. I saw the Count sprinkle drops from a phial on to his handkerchief and give it to the little lady. I saw her fall back softly on the couch.

Her father watched with rapt attention. The swans-down cloak that she had worn was hanging over the back of a chair. Suddenly he tore a bit of it away and held it to her lips. The light down never stirred.

I thought that I called out, but heard no sound. There was a weight of lead upon my eyes—the air was thick with fog. I fought with might and main to get to her. I could not stir a step. I could not even see her now.

Making one last effort to move, I missed my footing and fell—fell, as it seemed, into a yawning gulf that opened suddenly before me—fell down and down and down into the fathomless depths of that slumber wherein we spend the half of existence.

But Lethe had been meted out unevenly; to her the sleep that knew no earthly morrow—to me the sleep that ended in a few hours, leaving the rest of life a dream.

On the day after, I met the Count at eight o'clock in the morning. At eight o'clock in the evening I kept my dinner engagement.

[1898]

THE LADY ON THE HILLSIDE[1]

Meadows, tho' your flowers are bright,
Tho' you laugh, your laugh is light,
For the maid is rarer far
Than your sweetest garlands are.—MELEAGER.

'FOR my part,' said Michele, 'I do not admire the Duchess of Milan's daughters.'

'Whose daughters do you admire?' asked one of the others. 'Not Heaven's own, I think! I would not be the woman that you wed. Were she as fair as Venus, you would cast her very perfection in her teeth, because it left you nothing to wish for.'

'You speak truly, O wise young man! Perfection is none the less a vice because it is a vice that few are capable of practising. That which satisfies and does not stimulate the soul of man is but a snare of the Arch-enemy.'

'If that be so, the sooner we all marry the Graiae the better. They had but one eye between them, and they were always saying, "Oh, the old days were better than the new!" It must be truly edifying to contemplate the dissatisfaction in the soul of man that would result from such an union. Yet have I heard you swear that an ugly woman was not a woman at all.'

'He does not know what beauty is,' chimed in

[1] From *The Cornhill*, June 1898.

Guarnieri da Castiglionchio. 'He thinks so much about it that he never has time to see it. "He that observeth the wind shall not sow, and he that regardeth the clouds shall not reap." Paint your ideal beauty for us, Master Michele! (You will perceive that he cannot do it.) What is she like?'

They were leaning over a parapet on the Lung' Arno, between the Ponte Vecchio and the Bridge of the Four Seasons. Michele rested his chin upon his hand, and spoke thoughtfully.

'She is tall and slender, and her head is set upon her neck like that of a violet on its stem. The colour in her cheek is but a roseleaf dropped on lilies.'

'Hear him!' cried Ercole. 'She is not flesh and blood at all—this creature of roses and lilies! You might as well marry *Cantica Canticorum.* More detail, say I! What is her forehead like?—though I can tell without telling!'

'It is high and white.'

'I thought so. The eyebrows?'

'Perfect arch—so faintly marked that I am almost wrong to call it dark.'

'The nose? It is a little nose, of course?'

'The distance between it and the upper lip is perhaps a thought longer than with most women.'

'I should never know this angel of yours if I were to meet her. What sort of hair has she?'

Here Guarnieri interrupted.

'You must not tax his powers too far. Even the excellent hero of that excellent English comedy you showed me the other day, when he has numbered all the gifts that must unite in the person of his mistress, decides that her hair shall be "of what colour it please God."'

'Nay, nay,' Michele said. 'I know the colour of her

hair—a dark auburn. It is twisted in rippling lines like those the waves make out at sea beyond Pisa—it takes as many ever-varying forms as flame.'

'"The Fair One with the Golden Locks" was nothing to this lady.'

'Your description reminds me too much of Medusa,' said Ercole. 'There is something serpentine about hair that looks as if it were endued with separate life. And, except for this, Guarnieri is right. You have given no details that can be recognised. To quote again his favourite barbaric author—

'"How shall I your true love know?"'

'By her motion,' Michele said, so fervently that his three friends looked up surprised; 'for she moves like a goddess. By her voice, for, when she speaks, you hear the singing of the spheres.'

'Is she a fool?' inquired Guarnieri. 'A woman that looks like one of the Celestials generally is. She is a fool, of course?' Michele smiled mysteriously.

'She is wise,' he said. 'She has been taught wisdom.'

'Then she will never marry you, my fine fellow!'

'Why not?' Michele asked quickly.

'Why, indeed?' queried Ercole. 'A wise maid knows a wise man when she sees him.'

'That does she not,' cried Guarnieri. 'You, O Michele, are the wisest man of your years in Florence, for you have never been known to miss anything on which you had set your heart, and you have never been known to praise it when you had won it. You could tell us tales, if you would (nay, do not frown! who said you would?), of the fairest and most famous dames of our city. But for all that, Diotima her very self, if she

wedded, would rather wed Agostino here, who has a heart and no head—who fights anybody that dares to mention a lady said so much as "Good morning" to him, unless he does it on his knees.'

'Dear me!' said Ercole. 'How exceedingly foolish!'

'It is a kind of folly that women prefer to wisdom.'

'Ah, well! You ought to know, Castiglionchio. I have heard it said that you yourself are more of a woman than a man.'

'By whom?' said Guarnieri angrily.

'By the fair Riccarda di Ser Pace da Certaldo, whom Heaven preserve! I am bound to add that she said she liked Agostino much better.'

Guarnieri laughed.

'Oho! Sits the wind in that quarter? But Madonna Riccarda is privileged. If she speaks to me with her eyes, as she did the last time I saw her, she shall be forgiven the sins of her lips. By the way, Michele, there is one thing that you have not told us yet, anent this mistress of yours. Has she good eyes?'

Michele did not answer immediately. When he did, his voice shook.

'May I descend to the lowest circle of the lowest Inferno, if ever I speak of them!' he said.

A momentary pause followed.

Ercole had meant to laugh, but he checked himself.

Guarnieri frowned.

A sudden outbreak of sincerity, when no one expects it, is disagreeable to the nerves as lightning at noon in clear weather. There was some one, it appeared, and Michele was fond of her. Michele's friends had nothing to say.

Only one of them remained at his ease—one who had

not spoken before, but listened, sitting upon the parapet. He was the youngest of the group—scarcely past boyhood indeed. Now he came to the rescue.

'You will be late for the Masque, all three of you,' he said. 'The bells rang nine long ago.'

'The boy speaks well,' cried Ercole. 'Come, come Guarnieri! Stir those thin legs of thine, or Monna Riccarda will have something to say to thee, and I am much mistaken if she does not say it with her lips and her eyes also! Are not you coming, Agostino?'

'Not I.'

'And you, Michele? "It is best to be off with the old love before you are on with the new."'

'No doubt!' Michele said. 'I will join you later on in the evening. Do not wait for me.'

The two friends drew off, singing a light song as they went:

Quel che mi nega amor,
Spero dal mio furor;
Se non gradito fu il mio bel foco,
Del fier cielo le furie invoco,
Nel mio dolor.

So soon as they were out of sight, Michele laid his hand on Agostino's shoulder.

'You should have gone with them. You are young.'

'Why should I go? I have no lady-love. You should have gone, Michele. You have many.'

'Do you think so?'

Agostino turned round and looked at him.

'No,' he said slowly. 'You have one.'

'I have had many lovers,' Michele said, 'but now the time is come to love. I have sought the whole world over; now at last I have found. Yes, there is one. I

have talked with her many times. I have instructed her in the ways of wisdom. On the wild hillside, where she lives, she sees no man except her father. When first I spoke to her of love, she stared and started like a frightened thing. In three days' time I go to wed her. You only understood—you only saw. I do not want those chattering geese to know. Keep my secret, sweet friend, and wish me well!'

All the rest of his life Agostino remembered that moment—the double sparkle of the lights upon the Ponte Vecchio, bright up above, softened in the waters; the shadowy fisherman in his shadowy boat, raising his cage-like net of gossamer; the still, dreadful moon, hung like a fiery disc in the deep, quiet sky.

'In seven days,' he said, 'I also leave my home, not to return thither. I know not why I am going. I shall not seek as you have sought. When the hour strikes, I think that I shall find without seeking. Tell this to no one, Michele, but keep my secret and wish me well!'

Agostino blushed as he spoke. To himself he seemed to have made a great confession. Michele scarcely heard it, nor did it strike him that he too had received a confidence.

. . . . . .

Seven days later Agostino rode up the Via delle Belle Donne. He was gaily dressed in a suit of white satin and silver.

'The bridegroom! The bridegroom!' the little children in the streets shouted after him; and he lifted his cap good-naturedly, as if he were the duke himself.

The old men shrugged their shoulders as he passed.

'The fool!' said they; 'however, youth is always young.'

Agostino was in the mood to think every one beautiful. The children were Holy Innocents, the old men Solomons in all their glory. And, indeed, if there be any place where a man may defend the foolishness of feeling happy because the sun shines, Florence, in the month of May, is that place.

Agostino had few memories, and his hopes were still vague and indefinite, airy thoughts that were bound to nothing on earth and lost themselves in the blue. He was not compelled to build upon the future because the past lay in ruins. His life hitherto had been gentle. He lived it fearlessly, seeing no evil; wanting nothing because, when desire is not yet awakened, a very little will satisfy one who has it in him to desire the whole world.

He was on his way now to find out for himself what the world looked like beyond the walls of Florence, moved by no discontent, but by that restlessness in the blood which, at the season when Nature teaches her winged children to build houses, stings the children of men to forsake theirs, and to seek in travel the new life that the wandering creatures find in rest. He could hardly forbear singing aloud as he rode.

A flood of light bathed the stern palaces, and opened the buds of all the climbing plants along the walls and round the windows. The streets were like a shifting garden. Every girl whom he met carried a sheaf of blossoms. A child, like a big flower in red from top to toe, stole out from the shadow of one of the dark doors, looked up to a window and kissed his hand to the roses there, then laughed a roguish laugh and ran across the bridge.

Agostino had not made up his mind in what direction he was going; he followed the child.

The goldsmiths on the Ponte Vecchio had set forth all their toys. Every counter flashed; the small black booths were afire with brightness. The flood beneath had turned jeweller—diamonds were sparkling on the troubled Arno. The child looked down and clapped his hands, dancing for joy.

One of the goldsmiths at the farther end, who dealt in magic rings—toadstones and such brown ware—glanced up at Agostino somewhat wistfully as he passed.

'A fine young man!' he murmured, 'and going to his bridal.'

Agostino did not hear the words; if he had, they would have sent him hotly on his way. But he saw the look, and, being sorry that any one should wish for anything in vain from him on such a morning, he stopped.

'Hola, sir shopman of the sad countenance! Where is the brightest jewel in your window?'

'It is not far to seek,' the man said, smiling, and showed him a ring of seven fire-opals.

'That is a rainbow,' said Agostino. 'I want only the sun.'

'Nay, Cavaliere,' the man said; 'what is a rainbow but the sun shining on rain, making it sunshine too?'

Agostino laughed, counted out the price (for he was careful), and hid the ring beneath his satin vest. The child had disappeared meanwhile.

'I have lost my guide for a bit of finery,' said Agostino to himself. 'No matter! I shall find him again when I need him. The world is full of guides who do not know whither they are going.'

As he spoke, a scarlet butterfly fluttered down from the branches of a tall lilac that overtopped the wall, and

flew in zigzags on before him, like a flower blown loose from its stem.

'My guide for me,' laughed Agostino, and followed.

The butterfly led him out of the city and far along the road to the mountains. After a while he lost it in the new green and the old grey of a rough olive, and then he followed the windings of the path. He had never in his life ridden so far on this side of the city, for he was of a home-keeping disposition, and during his childhood and early youth cared for valleys and mountains, trees, birds, and living creatures, only when he could look at them through the eyes of poets and story-tellers. Often had he been angered because older men bade him 'lift up his eyes unto the hills,' when they were fixed on snowy alps, on dazzling peaks, and pinnacles of ice taller than any outside the covers of a book. Nevertheless, his books of late had left him lacking somewhat. They did not hold, as heretofore, the six days of creation and an eternal Sabbath besides.

One day the spring wind rustled the pages that he could not read, and spoke to him louder than Petrarch. One day the sun struck down on them, so that the black and white danced before his eyes, and looking up he saw the sun.

Now, for the first time, he gazed about him, and felt as though a veil had lifted; as long as the sky were blue he could never again be altogether sorrowful. His books were old compared with the immortal youth of trees; the passion that had set him on fire for love and bravery grew chill beside the warmth of this ancient light. What was beauty itself, frozen into a form of words, to the changing, singing, shining beauty of the earth in springtime? While he read he had often been

troubled by a longing to see the magician who painted such marvellous pictures; but now the fulness of content was his—he had no desire to behold the author of this book.

'Pure Homer!' he said, recalling dimly something that he had felt when he heard learned men questioning if Homer were one person or many, and wondered why they thought it worth while.

As for his friends, he needed them not. The absence of the dearest of them was gain rather than loss. Now that he lived alone and free, he knew—how well he knew!—that they had often left him lonely, that the very closeness of their attachment kept him in prison. Here there was no friendship: he and the world were one.

He had come to the outskirts of a wood by now; the trees were scattered apart at short distances from each other. As he rode under one of them his cap caught on a bough. Staying a moment to right it, a little song close to his ear stopped suddenly, and peeping in he saw among the fresh green leaves and buds a nest on which a tiny brown bird sat with twinkling eyes. He let the bough go softly, not to frighten her, and waited; but the song did not begin again, and he rode on, deep in thought. Where was her mate? It vexed him to have sent a thrill of fear, even unconsciously, through any heart, when he himself was full of joy. The sight of the bird seemed to have snapped a cord, and the vague yet eager longing which had driven him forth from the city quickened and grew and burst its bonds.

As he set spurs to his horse and went galloping through the forest, it appeared to him that the world fell away on either side leaving him in an undreamed-of solitude.

What were these long-lived trees to him? Their trunks were covered with moss when he was born; they would but wear a little more when he was dead. What were these woodland creatures? They had their loves and sorrows quite apart.

He had flung his arms around the world; vast as it was, it could not fill them. It failed him as his friends had failed him. It was not many that he needed; it was not all. Certain words spoken a week ago took form and shaped themselves in his mind: 'There is one.'

And there, in the full, golden light of morning, lay a girl, clothed from head to foot in a long robe of green. Quite still she lay, and seemed asleep. There was no colour in her cheeks.

How long he stood there gazing, after he had dismounted from his horse, he did not know. He, who had never feared anything, was filled with fear, which cast him down into depths of humility that his religion had never fathomed. He bent his head, shading his eyes with his hand; when he drew it away again it was wet.

'God made you,' he said.

Her long white hands, thrown loosely one upon the other, held a letter between them. Her head was cushioned upon a hillock of moss: the soft bright hair fell like a fairy cloak on either side of her, and glistened where it caught the sun. At her feet, on the edge of her robe, lay a little long-haired dog, his furry squirrel's tail curled over his back, his sharp nose resting on his paws, and his eyes shut.

Both figures were perfectly still. It was only sleep that had quieted the dog: was it something else that

kept the lady without motion? The holy and joyful fear in him changed into terror at the thought.

With hushed steps coming nearer, he knelt upon the ground by her side, and, bending over, listened. There was no breath. When, trembling at his own audacity, he laid his hand upon her bosom, it did not heave. Trembling still more, he touched her hand. Just such a chill had struck through him when he touched that of a statue.

The letter had fallen to the ground. As he picked it up he perceived that the cover of it bore this inscription: 'To the Wayfarer.' The writing was delicate and fine, but stiff. Wonder grew upon him as he broke the seal and read: 'O! thou, who findest without seeking, bury me as thou hast found me, for the love of that love for which I am dead.' Agostino folded it up again carefully, so that the paper bent to the same lines, and laid it next his heart.

It was not possible to do anything while the heat lasted, and he sat down to watch. Hunger and thirst were forgotten. In his long vigil of the day he tasted that perfect happiness which kills all bodily need.

The rays of the sun were slantwise when the dog awoke, and, running farther up the hill among the trees, began to bark. Loth to go, yet dreading an alien presence, Agostino rose quickly and followed it for some time. The trees thinned out again as they neared the summit, and down the rough mountain-path a man came riding slowly and wearily. Could Agostino have avoided meeting him he would have done so, but there was no help for it; his very impatience to be back again told him that he must wait.

As the man came nearer, he recognised with a dim

feeling of surprise, the castdown features of Michele, and was recognised in his turn.

Michele reined in a tired steed and said bitterly :

'Well met, Agostino! Is the time come to love?'

'Yes!' Agostino said.

'You make short work of it!' I have been seeking for years. When I saw you but a week since, you had not yet begun the search.'

'No,' Agostino said, 'I have found.'

He spoke as though afraid to say it, and yet Michele heard.

'What is the lady like?' he asked scornfully.

'What is she like?' said Agostino, as though he were trying to remember. 'She is tall and slender. Her forehead is high and very white, and the arched eyebrows are faintly marked, soft and dusky. Her hair is a dark auburn with rippling lines in it, like those the waves make out at sea beyond Pisa.'

He scarcely recollected that he had heard these words before, nor did they seem to him like that which he had seen; they rose to his lips of themselves, as it were.

Michele's eyes flamed, and he laid his hand on the hilt of his sword.

'Wretch!' he cried aloud. 'You have stolen her.'

'What do you mean?' said Agostino, who cared little.

'You have stolen all that was mine in her, down to the very words in which I treasured it. Those were mine, and you heard them.'

'Are you mad?' Agostino inquired.

'Not mad, but like to be. Forgive me, sweetest friend! Your words were as a knife in an open wound.

I have risked all upon one venture, and have lost. So you are happy?'

'Tell me why you are not.'

Michele turned his face away, that Agostino might not see the flush of shame that reddened it. He spoke as one whose speech costs him so many moments out of life to utter.

'When I reached her father's home three days since, it was to hear that she had left it. She told me once before that she would not wed me, because she did not love me, and without love she held it sin to wed. The very day I came she disappeared. She left no clue, we ransacked all the neighbourhood in vain. I have wandered everywhere seeking——'

'And I have found her,' said Agostino.

Michele's sword flashed from its sheath.

'Where is she?' he shouted.

Agostino pointed back to the wood.

'Give her to me!' Michele cried, 'or, by the powers of hell——'

Agostino straightened his back against the trunk of a stone-pine, and prepared to defend himself.

'I will not give her up,' he said. 'Εὕρηκα—I have found her.'

And he saluted.

Michele flew at him like a wild cat.

He was fighting, for the first time in his life, with reckless fury, while his opponent was cool and collected, and so composed in mind that he compared the gleam of the steel, burnished by the evening light, to a severed sunbeam, darting hither and thither. They had fought but a round or two when he broke his rival's weapon.

Agostino, standing over him, let him feel the touch of the sword-point at his throat.

'Whose is the lady now?' said he.

'Mine.'

For a long moment neither moved. All the life in Michele's veins seemed to be concentrated in the one spot where he felt the prick of the steel.

'Once more, for the last time,' said Agostino. 'Whose is the lady now?'

'Mine.'

'Then,' said the other, 'you are worthy, and I will take you to her. Come!'

Too much surprised to speak, Michele rose and followed, and Agostino led him to the clearing among the trees.

There lay the lady.

Michele turned to Agostino.

'Has she spoken?'

'I have never heard her voice.'

He flung himself upon the ground, his whole frame shaken with the violence of his grief. Then he turned angrily to Agostino.

'You have killed her!' he cried.

For all his answer Agostino drew forth the letter, and put it into Michele's hand.

'She was so weary that she could not live,' he said. 'She did not know the way. She wandered hither and thither, seeking to reach Florence. Here, of her weariness, she died. Look at her little dog! The creature is half starved.'

Michele gave back the letter, nor did he speak for many minutes.

'O Agostino!' he cried at last, 'if you had only seen her!'

Agostino did not answer. He was longing to be alone again.

'Since death has taken her from both of us——'

Michele stooped, as though to kiss her, but the other man drew his sword and held it between.

'No,' he said briefly, 'not that.'

There was something dangerous in his look.

Michele raised himself and uncovered his head.

'To-morrow,' he said, 'we will do her the last honours. She was a lady of birth.'

Agostino bowed.

The sun was all but sunk behind the mountains, when he took the dog in his arms, and rode back to the last village that he had left outside Florence.

The stars were bright when he returned on foot alone, and a strong sweet scent breathed from the pines. He drew the ring from his finger, and placed it solemnly on hers with solemn words.

Then he lay down beside her in the darkness.

Whether he dreamt awake or sleeping, he did not know, but all that night he spent in dreams, that she, sleeping her sleep unbrokenly, dreamed also of him.

He had brought with him the few things that were needful.

Before the sky was grey with dawn he dug her grave. Before he laid her in it, as he looked at her for the last time, he bent and kissed her on the eyelids twice.

'For I have never seen her eyes,' he said.

The birds began to sing as he smoothed the earth over her.

[1898]

THE SNOW IS COMING [1]

It is a long while since anything happened in this world for the first time. The first time the sun shone—the first time the snow fell—these things are not matter of record. By good luck, the first time is always recurring, especially in London. What Londoner does not remember the first time the sun shone again after a fog that lasted a week? And when the first snow falls the cockneys do not take it as if they were country folk. Strange excitement comes over them at the mere thought of sooty London dressed in white. A few go about quoting Mr. Robert Bridges, who alone of poets has understood them on this point; and the rest quote him without knowing.

I had not accounted to myself for it; but an unusual stir in my blood moved me to run, to shout, or sing, or behave in a manner that might have caused the police to interfere, as I went along the streets one evening in early winter. The gas-lamp is in itself a signal for the enjoyment of Londoners. They may be half asleep all day, but with the yellow dawning of those myriads of stars a glow of warmth quickens them. So much the better, if there should be a moon to make faces among the chimney-tops! (There was a moon that night.) If

[1] From *The Cornhill*, December 1898.

the snow be on the way, and the air tense with the expectation of it, the nerves awake and sting the languid soul into pleasure.

I turned down a poor alley to visit an acquaintance there—an Essex woman who talks about 'threadling' her needle, and supposes the plural of 'house' to be 'housen.' She is married to a sailor who sails the seas no more. He sometimes tries to explain to me the geography—or seagraphy—of a ship. I never understand it, but I have learned to talk about 'the ryals' and 'the main-topgallon,' whatever that may be.

'The snow is coming!' I said to his wife, with as much exultation as if I said 'The Queen is coming!'

'Yes, miss,' she said, 'and coals is one-and-threepence a hundred, and they 'll go up.' She glanced at the sky.

What a pity it is to have a financial interest in the weather! I felt ashamed because I had none. I remember Mrs. Ewing's heroine, who poked the fire 'expensively,' and sighed a little—and smiled also—to think that I could poke mine as often as I liked. Then I went to the South Kensington Museum, to look for a spinning-wheel.

The policeman and the man at the entrance were divided in their minds as to whether a spinning-wheel is a piece of furniture or a machine. If it is a piece of furniture, yes, you will find it there! If it is a machine, no, you will never find it unless you go across the road. Not feeling inclined to go across the road, I chose to consider it furniture.

Past one half and then the other of the column of Trajan, through the old tapestry-room, down the narrow corridor of snow-men and snow-women bequeathed to us by the Greeks and Romans, I went; and reached at last the place where chairs and tables, and beds and cabinets

and mirrors, ranged with forlorn regularity, show what beautiful homes people had once. There was never a spinning-wheel among them. I listened for the ghostly hum of it in vain.

Tired out after a long search, I sat down to rest on the pedestal of a cupboard.

The gallery was quite deserted, except for a woman of middle age, who seemed willing neither to go nor to stay. Something fidgety and wistful about her compelled one to notice her movements. She went to and fro with rapid, uncertain steps, making indefinite pauses before the object of her consideration—trying to leave it, as it were—always returning. The magnetic force that attracted her seemed to reside in a wooden cradle. There was nothing particular about it; it was not like the cradle of the Earl of Derwentwater, which stood near by —three black feathers that had once been golden still waved stiffly over the head. It was just a wooden cradle —nothing more, nothing less. Yet she came back again and again, as if she could not tear herself from the spot. She was a well-favoured person, fresh and weather-beaten, as though she had lived much in the open air. Her dress was so neat that the shabby material of it did not at first strike the eye; would not perhaps have struck me at all but for the fact that she wore woollen gloves. She was clearly a single woman; I could have told that by the vague suddenness of motion which is common to those who are much by themselves, and have not to think of disturbing other people in the room.

'You, here!' she said, addressing a policeman as he went by. 'Mine is much better than that,' and she pointed to the cradle. Her accent was good, but she spoke rather too loud for a lady.

'Indeed, Miss?' said the guardian of law and order, with great politeness. He knew as well as I did that she was *Miss* and not *Mrs.*

'Mine is old; it's been in our family from father to son, and all that kind of thing,' she went on. 'The Museum's given £6 for *that.* Do you think, now, they would give me £6 for mine? The carving on mine's much better. I know, because I'm an artist. That's not good art at all. Now mine's Elizabethan.'

'Maybe, Miss. Couldn't say. We ain't got but one or two specimens.'

'I've half a mind to do it,' she said, in quick, excited tones. 'It's awfully cold. I believe the snow's coming. I'm sick to death of London lodgings; there isn't room to swing a cat in them. I'd better by half have a fire to sit by. And I could always come and see the cradle here, couldn't I? They wouldn't take it away? I could always come and see it? I could come and see it every day if I liked.'

The policeman reassured her as to this, and moved on. Now, I thought, she would surely go. But she did not. She waited until the policeman was out of sight, when she took a biscuit from her pocket and began to eat carefully and furtively, making as few crumbs as possible. It was her afternoon tea, I supposed, and she was taking it here for the sake of the warmth.

'I beg your pardon,' I began. 'I heard you say just now that you had a beautiful old cradle. I happen to know a lady who is fond of such things. I feel sure that she would give you £10 if you would be so kind as to dispose of it to her.'

'No,' she said, without a moment's hesitation. 'I wouldn't part with it, not to any private individual. It

was my mother's, and my mother's mother's before her. I wouldn't let it go except to here. And I wouldn't do that, only the snow's coming. But I can come and see it here every day—every day—just as if it was in my own room.'

There was a refreshing absence of gratitude about her; she did not even say 'Thank you.' I turned away.

The streets were brighter, the air tingled more fiercely than ever as I went home; but I felt glad no longer because the snow was coming.

[1890]

THE CITY OF BYBLOS

'Ich habe einen kuriosen Respect vor dem Büchermachen, weil ich im Leben nie eins machen konnte.'—Michael Hauptmann.

It lies behind a large lending library. When I had walked through several miles of novels, I came at last to the City. It had a very remarkable appearance, for the houses were built entirely of books. Very pretty houses they were too (though somewhat square), the colouring bright and varied, the name of the owner in gold letters over every door. In the midst of them stood a vast Cathedral, every stone of which was a work on Theology. A number of very uneven *Steps to the Altar* led up to it. I must say, it looked rickety, for not one of the stones exactly fitted the other, but strange to say, they told me the spire was the safest part. Standing far down below, I naturally could not see the names of books so far above me, but I was told that those of the most elevated character had by a natural process risen to the top; the Weathercock had veered about considerably in early life, but had now for a long time pointed due South. There was much to admire in the Architecture. *The Lives of the Saints* would have made exquisite Gothic doorways, but that they contradicted each other so much in detail. The gargoyles, which were cut out of controversial pamphlets, were

making diabolical faces, but the stained-glass windows, being the work of poets, were exquisitely transparent, and formed indeed the most harmonious part of the Cathedral. The East window had been painted by Keble, and round the border ran this legend: *The Christian Year.* I got in with some difficulty. The dust that was flying about almost choked me, and I found it quite impossible to do more than speculate as to the construction of the interior. However, as it seemed to be of no particular Age or Style, that mattered the less.

'We think it our duty to tell you——' began the Cathedral, all the books speaking at once. But they all spoke very loud, and they all said something quite different, so that at last, unable to distinguish anything in such a Babel, I walked sorrowfully away.

'Why can't you keep them quiet?' I said to the Verger, a decent-looking man, clothed in black, who had opened the door for me with a *Key to the Interpretation of The Holy Scripture.*

'It 's all very well to talk,' he said despondently, 'but they are the most ill-mannered books in the world. They can't endure each other. I assure you, when any repairs have to be executed, the row is quite deafening. Only a year or two ago, when one of the buttresses showed signs of giving way, and we propped it up with Farrar's *Eternal Hope*, they made such a noise, that I thought they would have brought the whole building about our ears.—It 's very odd though,' he continued, 'I let in a man the other day, and when he came out again, he told me he heard them all singing the Hallelujah Chorus, but when I asked the books about him afterwards, they said he was a Jew, Turk, Infidel and Heretic.'

'They are the very strangest books in the world,' I said, giving him sixpence. 'Thank you. Which is the main thoroughfare?'

'Whichever you like,' he rejoined. 'It really doesn't matter in the least. But most people think it's through the Cathedral.'

I knew, however, that if I ventured to cross the threshold the Cathedral would begin talking again, and besides I considered the Verger's last remark very professional, so I left him on the steps, and diving into a side alley, went my own way, without asking any one else's. It is a curious place. Every house is a shop, and every other inhabitant is a Sandwich Man. The brothers and sisters of the Sandwich Men keep the shops, and as it is all done in a family way, the profits are enormous. They have a few first cousins, who are conjurers, and I came upon one of these at the first street corner I turned. He was his own Sandwich Man, and he was shouting at the top of his voice: 'Tricks of the trade! Tricks of the trade! Tricks of the trade! A penny for my thoughts! A penny for my thoughts! Who'll buy?' whereupon he immediately sat down on a mat and vanished. 'A penny for your thoughts indeed!' I said contemptuously; 'I don't think much of that. Mr. Isaacs taught it me long ago.' The performance took place in Queer Street, just outside a very odd-looking shop with a number of hearts hung up in the window.

'There's a great demand for them just now,' said the shopman, 'specially women's. Mrs. Carlyle's is a fortune. Keats's fetched a good price some little while ago. Shelley's was said to be too light; didn't realise anything like Harriet's and Mary Wollstonecraft's. I've heard it denied that Wordsworth ever had any to speak of, but

that 's not true, for I sold it myself over this very counter. George Eliot's was large but not juicy. Charlotte Bron——'

'Oh hush!' I said, interrupting him, 'it really does distress me very much. I have heard of a lady long ago, who "locked her heart in a gowden case, and pinned it wi' a siller pin." Are there no ladies who do this now, or no gentlemen to keep the key of the case for them?'

'No,' said the shopman, 'they mostly put them into envelopes, and the gentlemen break them open. One or two may have been kept in diaries here and there, but that 's not so common.'

'I never did approve that fashion of wearing your heart on your sleeve, for all the daws to peck at,' I observed.

'You don't understand,' rejoined the shopman. 'They 're not alive, my dear Sir. *The Dead Heart* is a stock piece everywhere.'

'I remember a fair Queen of France,' I said, following up the dim poetical association of certain words, 'whose dead heart was really locked in a golden case, with these words inscribed on it:—

> En ce petit vaisseau
> De fin or et monde
> Repose un plus grand cœur
> Que oncque dame eut au monde.

'She was a Queen of Hearts in her day, but I never heard that she let any one into her own.'

'Indeed,' cried the shopman eagerly, 'it must be very valuable. Could you give me an idea where it is to be found?'

'Why, no!' said I, 'I couldn't. But you can have *my* heart if you like. It 's very tender. How much are you prepared to offer?'

'Thank you, sir,' replied the shopman politely, but

rather coldly, 'it wouldn't be of the slightest use, at least not while you're alive, you know. Besides, I couldn't take your word. If it's so very tender, you may have lost it, and then I should make a better bargain with some one else. I don't say you *wish* to deceive.'

Considering this last remark impertinent, we left, my heart and I.

The next shop was full of little bottles containing a pale grey liquid, and a signboard, with 'Old Morality' printed on it in very big letters, swung to and fro over the door. I felt confused. 'Surely it must be "Old Mortality" spelt wrong,' I thought, 'they read so much in this city, that they've forgotten how to spell,' but no such thing.

'Taste and try,
Before you buy,'

said the shopman unctuously.

'It's not very good,' I said, making a wry face.

'No?' he returned in an inquiring tone. 'That's because the bottle you tasted came from Paris. Gallic Salt they call it. Some people say it's not Morality at all. Kept too long. Gone bad, you know. But the French declare it's the real thing, and they're the best chemists in the world. They say it's too strong to go down everywhere, but only the other day I heard some young English ladies were taking it in the form of Lectures.[1] Try a little Russian. You'll find it very good, mixed with steel. Tolstoi's recipe is the best.'

'No, thank you,' said I. I had had enough of the French. 'Do you find it answers from a business point of view, to keep a shop of this kind?'

[1] See Prospectus of King's College Lectures to Ladies for the last term of 1889.

'Mine,' said the Apothecary, puffing himself out to his proudest proportions, 'mine is the most thriving business in Queer Street. Small doses sell best of all. You don't want too much of it in a book, you know, but a little you must have. It 's the vinegar in the salad. Of course there are people who make books without it, but unless they happen to be Ouida, it doesn't pay. And even Ouida would have sold much better, if she 'd only had a dash of it. Try our celebrated Milk and Water Morality. It 's as sweet as sugar; children like it. You don't look very strong. You won't be happy till you get it. The authoress of *We Two* writes, '*I find it invaluable.*'

I shook my head and touched a little bottle of pills.

'Those are the bitter pills of Melancholy,' he explained. 'But they 're not much the fashion now. Iron 's the thing. "A tonic sadness," and all that, you know.'

As I was not in the humour for a tonic sadness, I left the shop. A big *Ménagerie* was coming down Queer Street. Lions and tigers, warranted to sell again admirably, might be booked for Christmas, I was informed. Fairies were on view within, and there was a witch or two.

'But I can't recommend them, sir,' said the literary Barnum, shaking his head. 'They 're not what they used to be. The race has degenerated sadly. Even an infant of two years old don't believe in them any longer. As for trees that isn't trees, and shadows with eyes to them, and that sort of performance, there 's only George MacDonald can do it, and you can't keep them on stock for one customer. Mr. Anstey bought a Black Poodle here the other day; I can show you the exact ditto, if——'

But at this moment a Polar Bear broke loose from the

Ménagerie, and caused considerable commotion among the Sandwich Men, who began rushing hither and thither in wild alarm.

'It 's very provoking,' said the Manager, arming himself with a lasso. 'Can you wait a moment? I shall have to go after that animal. He 's sure to get into some book he 's not intended for, and then there 'll be the deuce to pay. He 'll be wanted all over the place for Voyages to the North Pole and the first chapters of Lives of Lord Nelson, in a week or two, and he 's a dead loss to me if I can't catch him. Good gracious me! The beast 'll be into that china shop!'

This last observation was levelled at the head of a wild bull, who had taken advantage of the ungenerous conduct of the Polar bear, to effect his escape likewise.

'I 'll look after the bull,' said I. 'You tackle the bear.'

It seemed the kindest, though not the bravest thing to do. By the time I had reached the china shop, however, the wild bull was gone, and the shopman was sitting, like Marius at Carthage, in the midst of a heap of ruins, the fragments of a bit of Sèvres porcelain in his hand.

'If you want any more *Ballades in Blue China,*' he observed savagely, 'you must sing them yourself.'

'I suppose you think I 'm Andrew Lang,' I returned, 'but I 'm not.'

'I never supposed you were anything of the kind,' said this rudest of the inhabitants of Byblos.

'Oh, Austin Dobson! Austin Dobson, oh! To think such a thing should have happened in an old-established shop that was an old-established shop in the days of Charles Lamb!'

I left him there lamenting, and passed on. As the next shop had Modes et Robes over the door, I thought it must be more of a place for ladies, and was about to go further, when the Modiste herself came out and implored me to enter. She sold the most incongruous costumes quite impartially. Frocks for girls just out of the schoolroom, suits of armour *à la* Vandyke, the tempestuous petticoats of the *danseuse*, the hat and gaiters of the Dean, were here mingled together in picturesque confusion, and just as I was about to express my surprise, I heard a cry of 'Old Clo,' and a wild and weary man with a hooked nose came in, and upset a number of helmets and battle-axes on to the floor.

'But the latest fashion is 1745,' said the Modiste, 'plain black with very long ruffles. Mr. R. L. Stevenson bought some here the other day, and expressed himself very well satisfied; he said they became the Master of Ballantrae admirably. You don't happen to have one of your heroes with you? We are at liberty just now, and I should be happy to accommodate him. There's a fitting-room upstairs, and you can have tea while you wait.'

'Alas!' I said, 'I have seen many heroes, but I could never make one.'

'Couldn't you really?' said the dressmaker sympathetically. 'Well now, suppose you try! It's not in the least difficult, provided you have good clothes. The clothes are half the battle. Why, a bunch of feathers will do, so you arrange them properly. I've known a hero that was a very great success with no more clothes on than that. He hadn't a stitch of lace to bless himself with. But lace is very much worn still. There was quite a rage for it after the first appearance of Mr. John

Inglesant. Rags are fashionable too—for the East End. We 've got a rag and bone department next door. But perhaps you 'd rather get your hand in on a heroine. They 're as easy as easy! There must be a certain style about the hero, even if he does wear plain black, but there needn't be any whatever about the heroine, in fact it makes her all the more charming to have none. What can be prettier than a simple white muslin? Gentlemen's ladies always wear white muslin, and ladies' gentlemen black velvet. Or if you 'd prefer a little more trimming, what do you say to a satin cloak—of the very faintest, palest wood-beetle green?' It 's very effective, if you give the young lady "ashen hair." If she follows it up well, and has "a glove-like waist that seems without a wrinkle and made of whitest kid," and if "her shoulders peep more snowy" over it, I should also advise a frothy train of rippling. That would be enough to get her into the best magazine going. No? Well, we 've got a lot of baby-linen over from Paris, too. I expect Monsieur Alphonse Daudet in every minute. But would you like to have first choice? There 's a very good toyshop over the way; you 'll find the baby-dolls extremely cheap. There 's a sale going on just now. And they can walk and talk, and shut their eyes, and do everything.'

Too thankful to escape from the Modiste on any pretence, I dashed across the street into the toyshop. It was very gay indeed outside, the walls consisting wholly of the covers of children's books, but within it was anything but lively. There was a whole row of Little Lord Fauntleroys sitting in arm-chairs, with one of their legs tucked under them, and looking unutterably bored.

'Are you a bloodthirsty tyrant?' they all said with the sweetest smile, putting their legs down with one accord.

I had almost said, 'What a very impertinent little boy you are, to ask such a question!' but they did it with such engaging innocence that I was quite disarmed, and besides, my attention was attracted by half a dozen Sarah Crewes, who were trying to get the orphan out of *Our Mutual Friend* to play with them. But the orphan seemed inclined to be anything rather than Sarah Crewe's mutual friend.

'No,' he said, with the air of a child more than double his age, 'I've got to die so soon, it really is not worth while. Besides, what's the use of it? Nobody minds in the least. I'm not a fashionable little boy any longer.'

Here he began to die straight off in front of me. Unable to endure the sight, I turned away, but it was only to read in the pathetic eyes of twenty little Leonards the Story of their Short Lives.

'Boots and black beetles!' I cried—it was an oath that I remembered to have seen in a work adapted for the young, so I was not afraid of shocking them. 'What a horrible place this is! Are there no children alive anywhere?'

'Oh, but we're much more touching when we die!' they said in eager chorus, 'and we sell so much better!'

'I was misunderstood besides,' added the most moving of the whole lot. 'You're misunderstanding me now. I'm going to die.'

'Oh, *please* don't!' I entreated; but his eyes had already begun to close, and a deathly pallor overspread his countenance.

'There are some children that never die round there,' he said faintly, pointing to another department, and a few minutes afterwards he expired.

I was much tempted to stay and speak to Gavroche, whom I had noticed playing with a gun on the doorstep, but the immediate vicinity of Froggy and his little brother prevented me, and before I had time to get out, a cheerful little girl with long, wavy curls ran up to me, and said abruptly:

'How does the wind look when it doesn't blow?'

'My dear,' I said, 'you may ask interesting questions, but you have a strong American accent, and I'm sure I shouldn't know how to manage you. You will find everything that you need to know about the wind in *The Child's Guide to Useful Knowledge*, and whatever is not in *The Child's Guide to Useful Knowledge*, no little girl should want to——'

But here another little girl, exactly like the first, except that she was not at all cheerful, suddenly flung herself into my arms, and bursting into sobs, exclaimed passionately:

'When will you come back again,
Papa, Papa?'

'Didn't I do it nicely?' she added the next minute, smiling at me through her tears. 'Will you engage me, and put me into a book?'

'Very nicely indeed,' I replied, 'I almost wish I really were your papa and could come back again, but as I'm not, and as I haven't the least desire to put you into a book, I think you'd better get down, my dear.'

I set her on her feet, and again turned to the door, but was again withheld by all the Little Lord Fauntleroys, who said plaintively: 'Won't you put me into a book,

and let us be naughty just for once? We don't know what it's like. It would be something quite new.'

'My lords!' I said sternly, for I beheld in them the future aristocracy of England, 'you don't know what you're asking. Lords never are naughty,' and I departed. I heard the voice of a baby that could only just speak, remarking, 'I'se Popsy-Wopsy' somewhere around my feet, and babies of that age are specially calculated to drive bachelors mad. There were two shops over the way, one bearing the inscription *Howells and James*, where I understood from the advertisements there were several good heroines on view, and one for the sale of language. 'Wardour Street English is cheap to-day,' I read over a bundle of the sort of expressions that begin with 'By my halidome!' 'Useful' was stuck up over a packet of remarks in French, German, and Italian, the grammar of which certainly never cost any one much. 'Very moderate' on a parcel of the very moderate number of quotations, without which it is apparently impossible to produce either a volume of sermons or a modern romance. The sight of 'Nature red in tooth and claw' scared me away at once.

I did not feel inclined to enter Howells and James's, it sounded too much like a shop I knew already. There were a good many heroes and heroines standing idle in the market-place, but I did not take to any of them, though several of them offered themselves on advantageous terms.

'Where are the rest of you?' I said; 'you are not all here. I miss "the old familiar faces."'

'They've been turned out to grass,' responded a stray baronet, 'they thought it would keep them fresher. They're sitting on a hundred gates all round a square

field until they're wanted again, because they've got no style. There was a paper about it in *The Cornhill.* You ought to have known that, if your reading had been up-to-date.'

I considered him nearly as rude as the owner of the china shop, but at that moment my attention was distracted by the passing of a procession of four of the Sandwich Men, carrying two beautiful books on litters. They were both very white, but I thought that was simply due to the fact that they were bound in parchment, until I heard some one say that one of the books had been murdered and the other seriously hurt. The men who had charge of the book that was still alive set down their burden at the door of a hospital, where it was taken in by kind nurses, and put to bed in a great big ward with several others, whereupon, to my great surprise, they all began to talk at the tops of their voices.

'Will it recover?' I said in an awestruck whisper.

'Well!' said one of the nurses, 'it's been badly wounded by the critics, but I think it'll do if we can only talk long enough and loud enough. They always die of neglect in the end—never of wounds.'

'And how long will it be, supposing it does recover?'

'Oh, three months in town perhaps, and six in the country,' said the cheerful nurse. 'But it's in a critical state just now, and you really must not interrupt me.'

She began to talk again as hard as she could, and I stopped my ears, and ran away out of the hospital, down the street after the murdered book. They carried it outside the walls to a great desolate cemetery, where nothing grew but faded laurel. If I had done no other work for the rest of my natural existence, I never could have counted the graves that it contained. There was

not a single monument, not a stone over any one of them. I remembered the nurse's words: 'They always die of neglect.' There was not even a wreath of everlastings anywhere to be seen. Here and there in odd corners men with long nails were scratching in the ground like ghouls.

'Those are the antiquaries,' said the gravedigger, 'they come here pretty often, and sometimes they unearth a thing or two, but not much. It is believed that treasure does exist in the shape of buried wisdom. But how dieth the wise book? As the foolish, and there 's a deal of folly buried here. They 're very busy over the Elizabethan corner just now.'

I turned away, sick at heart, and quitted the cemetery. A broad road went past it, and I walked along it for some time, until I happened to meet a Sandwich Man, and asked him where it led to.

'Down to the river of Lethe,' he said, 'you 're quite close to it now, but you could never hear it, it flows so silently. Some people call it the stream of Time, but the old name is the best. They say it will flood the cemetery by and by. All the books get there sooner or later, only a few of them make the tour of the world first. Most of them take the direct road, as you see.'

They were hurrying past me as he spoke, big books, little books, serious and frivolous, pretty and ugly, wise and ridiculous, they were all wobbling along as fast as they could go, down to the river.

'Stop, stop!' I cried. (There were so many that I knew amongst them, and they had been such good friends to me! Only one or two that I had never read, and the very names of which were unknown to me, were

going leisurely the other way. I redoubled my exertions to save my friends.)

'Come back, come back!' I cried, 'you'll all be drowned! Make the tour of the world first!'

But not one of the books seemed to hear me, and a thing in twenty-nine editions bumped itself up against me, screaming out, 'I'm the successful book of the season. I shall be there first. Hootity-tootity-too!'

I felt so much annoyed with the silly, conceited thing, that I held my peace, and then, out of the varying cries around, out of the distant shouts of the Sandwich Men, out of the washing of the waves of Lethe, there rose a warning voice that said in words that I had heard long ago in my childhood, 'Of making many books there is no end.'

THE CONSCIENTIOUS SECRETARY

There lives in Bond Street a Secretary, a little pale, gentle man, with long thin fingers and eyes that see nothing close to them. Every one likes him, but no one keeps him long. He is never out of employment, for he is always engaged as soon as he appears, but he has a new master every few weeks. No one, however, says anything against him. His testimonials would fill a volume: everywhere it is stated that his handwriting is excellent, his character a perfect model.

'Why then did you not keep him?' I inquired of his thirty-first employer, a solid, red-faced business man, *comme il y en a tant.* For some reason or other, he did not like answering my question. He rose—put his hands in his pockets—went over to the window, looked out at nothing—whistled—came back again. He is of those who are obliged to tell the truth because they have no imagination. I had only to wait.

'Because,' he said, 'he always dots his *i*'s and crosses his *t*'s twice over. I wouldn't say anything against him for £100, you know. He's the best little fellow in the world. But he always dots his *i*'s and crosses his *t*'s twice over.'

'What can be the reason of such an odd habit?' I asked.

My friend sighed.

'He says it 's for the good of posterity. We don't see so well as our grandfathers did, and our grandchildren won't see so well as we do, and we are bound to give them every chance. He would rather not dot an *i* at all than not dot it twice over. I dare say he is right. We think too little about the future nowadays. But it takes time, and time is money.'

When my friend says 'Time is money,' he thinks he has said everything there is to say about time. The rest of the employers think just the same.

[1907]

CATS IN COUNCIL

Two cats were once enjoying *The Merchant of Venice* together.

One was a stage cat. The actors and actresses were very fond of her, and she often sat in the prompter's box, on first nights especially.

'I acted once myself!' she said in a confidential whisper aside to her friend. 'It was in *Romeo and Juliet*. I have every sympathy with young love, and all my warmest feelings are stirred when the *jeune premier* knows how to climb like a cat, as Romeo does. But they talked about a lark and a nightingale until my mouth watered. It always does, you know, when I hear people say "What larks!" I thought there really must be a bird or two in that very stiff green tree that grows outside all the windows in Verona: so I ran across the stage as fast as ever I could. You have no conception of what it is to be on the stage. I never knew before what nervousness was. All those opera-glasses fixed upon one, all those restless, flashing human eyes! But I was a *succès fou*. With one scrabble of my paws, without even blotting a line, I changed a tragedy into a comedy. Every one laughed—even Romeo and Juliet, poor dear young things!'

'Ah!' said the parlour cat, who came from South

Kensington, and had attended Shakespeare Readings. She thought it rather a vulgar story really.

Still they were both cats of superior education, and a good play was an intellectual treat to both. It was *caviare* to them in the sense in which a good play was *caviare* to the Prince of Denmark, not to the general.

'Very odd,' said the patroness of the stage, 'how much there is in the work of Shakespeare that is of the deepest interest to cats. I sometimes think he must have been a cat himself. Every inch of fur on my tail stands on end when I hear the sentinel say, as he walks up and down at Elsinore, "Not a mouse stirring!" I know the little wretches. Depend upon it, there were six at least in the cellarage under his very nose, if he had only sniffed. Hamlet knew that well enough. "A rat—a rat in the arras!" That was what he was thinking of the whole time. That was why he went mad. It is a very strange thing that the critics should never have thought of it. He had so much of the cat in him, had Hamlet!'

'If they had half the sense of smell that we possess, everything would have been found out long ago,' said the parlour cat. 'To my mind, *The Merchant of Venice* was written entirely to prove that men are not aware of the value of cats. When Shylock says that some men cannot bear "a humble, necessary cat" any more than a harmless necessary Jew, he says a thing that must go straight to the heart of every cat, from the first cat that caught fish in Egypt downwards.'

'I disagree with you there,' said the stage cat. 'I am inclined to think that our first ancestress, who is now drinking the cream of Paradise, came from Persia.'

'You may be right,' said the parlour cat, with a

magnificent wave of her tail, and a velvet claw half unsheathed. 'We were talking about Shakespeare, I think. Did it ever occur to you that the "green-eyed monster" must have been a very big cat that was called jealousy? The word *green* proves it, without a doubt. Who ever saw a green-eyed dog or a green-eyed horse? "Monster" is very gratifying also. It is amazing to find what an idea men have of our size. Lord Roberts, for instance! He cannot sit in the room with me. He is a little man, of course. He has conquered a great many other men, of course; but he cannot conquer his aversion to cats. It must be because he thinks they are so big. He can't dislike green, as he comes from Ireland.'

'I thought we were talking about Shakespeare,' murmured the stage cat suavely. Her eyes were not so good a green as those of the parlour cat.

The parlour cat stared at her for five minutes without blinking, and then pretended nothing had been said, and went on where she left off.

'A harmless, necessary cat!' she said. 'O my dear, how pathetic it is!' *Il n'y a pas de chat nécessaire.* There is no such thing as a necessary cat, not even though Shakespeare thought there was! We can all be dispensed with, even the best rat-catcher amongst us. I buried a friend of mine the other day, a gentleman most eminent in his profession, and what do you think? They replaced him next day with a mouse-trap!'

'Did they indeed?' said the stage cat, with deep sympathy. 'The play in *Hamlet*, the play that was written in very choice Italian, if you remember, was called *The Mouse Trap*.' Shakespeare knew, what man better? that everything goes wrong in a family where they have mouse-traps instead of cats. He was a cat himself, I feel quite sure of it.'

ESSAYS

[1884]

HER GRACE, THE DUCHESS[1]

The world is getting daily more democratic, and it is possible that we may soon arrive at that golden age of Socialists and Quakers which is to turn us all into Citizen this, and Friend the other. Still there are certain members of the aristocracy who will never even then be asked to don the *bonnet-rouge*, who will still exist to remind a free, equal, and fraternal world that there were once such things as kings and princes, and such-like futile distinctions between man and man. Their crowns will be as fresh then as on the day they wore them first, their courts as noble as before; for they cannot be got to talk the vulgar tongue, and they shall live for ever and ever, these grand aristocrats, most of whom never lived at all.

Strange that a prince who can make dukes by the dozen for the five years of his lifetime, should after that be at the mercy of a king-maker, whose style is generally plain Mr., and who can make nothing, not even money! Yet so it is, and the poet king-makers are very tyrannical in their choice of candidates.

Who is Shakespeare's ideal monarch? Not Alfred the Good, who first taught England how to read; not Edward I., who made her feel that the strength of her strength was unity, but that expensive hero who plunged her into one of the most unjustifiable and, in the end,

[1] From *The Theatre*, September 1884.

most fatal wars she ever undertook, to satisfy his own hungry ambition.

Queens in all ages and amongst all classes have been popular; as theirs will probably be the last of all titles to die out in the actual world, so theirs is the first in the world of poetry and plays. By the grace of William Shakespeare, Esq. (and others), they are, and always will be, Queens, Defenders of the Faith, within their dominions supreme.

Others there are too, not less noble, ladies in the great sense of the word, on whom their two hundred years and odd sit lightly, who claim the homage due to them as justly now as in the days of old, and prominent among these is the wonderful lady, whom Webster imaged to himself somewhere about the year 1612, and whom he called, in default of any Christian name that could properly express her, simply the Duchess—'The Duchess of Malfi.'

The age of ugly heroines had not set in when she was born. We see her first as a young and beautiful widow, hated by her grasping and envious brothers, Prince Ferdinand and the Cardinal, distrusted by her mean, suspicious courtiers, loved only by the very few who knew her well. As to her relations with her dead husband, Webster observes a significant silence. Shakespeare would almost certainly have noticed them, and shown how they re-acted on the true crisis of her life, just as he touched on Romeo's sentimental love for Rosaline, before he saw Juliet; but Webster leaves us to draw our own conclusions from the bare fact that he says nothing—good, bad, or indifferent. It is often so with him; he leads us to infer whatever it does not suit him to express, and his principal figures stand out all the more clearly

for their dark background. He is reticent even about his hero, the steward, unwilling to put him forward, lest the Duchess should suffer so much as a momentary eclipse. Excepting for his beautiful description of her in Act I., Antonio speaks seldom and briefly; enough to show us that he is a perfect gentleman, and not enough to show us much more, but for certain wonderfully fine little touches, in which the love that he keeps under lock and key peeps forth and will not be hidden. We can fancy the eloquent silence of such a man, how he would throw himself heart and soul into the Duchess's accounts, and keep her books as they were never kept before; how she, a sensitive, highly strung woman, could not fail to note this dumb devotion, and rate it at its true value. All this is matter of long standing, when the play begins. Webster had no business with the soft uncertain hints of early love; his passions are all grown-up, like his characters. Young though she be in years, the Duchess is old in prudence, and in that absence of girlish coquetry, which leads her, knowing that Antonio will never woo her of his own accord, to place the ring herself upon his finger. It is one of the most ungrateful tasks in the world to depict a woman making the first advances to a man; even Shakespeare achieved a very doubtful triumph with such a character as Helena in *All's Well that Ends Well.*

There is something absolutely repugnant to good taste about the leap-year lady. All the more wonderful for its refinement is the scene in which the Duchess of Malfi declares her love. All the struggles that it cost her, all the womanly shame which almost chokes her utterance at the last moment, are in those few words, spoken to her maid, Cariola, before Antonio enters.

'Good dear soul,
Leave me; but place thyself behind the arras,
Where thou mayst overhear us. Wish me good speed,
For I am going into a wilderness
Where I shall find nor path nor friendly clue
To be my guide.'

She had told no one what she meant to do, driven to do it by the intolerable loneliness of her position, knowing that even Cariola would not dare to approve her—but do it she must and would. Pretending that she wants to make a will, she questions Antonio (rather vaguely) about the state of her finances.

'ANT. I 'll fetch your grace the particulars of your
Revenue and expenses.
DUCH. Oh, you 're an upright treasurer; but you mistook,
For when I said I meant to make inquiry
What 's laid up for to-morrow, I did mean
What 's laid up yonder for me.
ANT. Where?
DUCH. In Heaven.
I 'm making my will (as 'tis fit princes should)
In perfect memory; and I pray, Sir, tell me
Were not one better make it smiling thus,
Than in deep groans and terrible ghastly looks,
As if the gifts we parted with procured
That violent distraction?
ANT. Oh, much better.
DUCH. If I had a husband now, this care were quit.'

Here after the Elizabethan manner, they fence a little with puns on the word 'will,' Antonio counselling her to marry again, and to give her husband all, even her 'excellent self.'

'DUCH. St. Winifred, that were a strange will.
ANT. 'Twere stranger if there were no will in you
To marry again.
DUCH. What do you think of marriage?
ANT. I take it as those that deny purgatory;
It locally contains or heaven or hell.
There 's no third place in 't.
DUCH. How do you affect it?
ANT. My banishment, feeding my melancholy,
Would often reason thus.
DUCH. Pray let us hear it.
ANT. Say a man never marry, nor have children,
What takes that from him? Only the bare name
Of being a father, or the weak delight
To see the little wanton ride a cock-horse
Upon a painted stick, or hear him chatter
Like a taught starling.
DUCH. Fie, fie, what 's all this?
One of your eyes is blood-shot; use my ring to 't,
They say 'tis very sovran; 'twas my wedding ring,
And I did vow never to part with it
But to my second husband.
ANT. You have parted with it now.
DUCH. Yes, to help your eyesight.
ANT. You have made me stark blind.
DUCH. How?
ANT. There is a saucy and ambitious devil,
Is dancing in this circle.
DUCH. Remove him.
ANT. How?
DUCH. There needs small conjuration when your finger
May do it; thus: is it fit?
[*She puts the ring on his finger.*
He Kneels.
ANT. What said you?
DUCH. Sir!

This goodly roof of yours is too low built!
I cannot stand upright in't, nor discourse
Without I raise it higher. Raise yourself
Or, if you please, my hand to help you; so.
ANT. Ambition, madam, is a great man's madness
That is not kept in chains and close-pent room,
But in fair lightsome lodgings, and is girt
With the wild noise of prattling visitants,
Which makes it lunatic beyond all cure.
Conceive not I 'm so stupid, but I aim
Whereto your favours tend; but he 's a fool
That, being a-cold, would thrust his hands in the fire
To warm them.

So long as she leaves him room to doubt for an instant whether she can live without him, he will not take advantage of her confession. In generosity, at least, he is her equal. As he says himself:—

Were there not heaven nor hell,
I should be honest; I have long served virtue,
And never ta'en wages of her.

But his grave and noble rejoinder only fires her still more, and, with an outburst of magnificent, appealing scorn, she flings all vain equivocation to the winds:—

The misery of us that are born great!
We are forc'd to woo, because none dare woo us:
And as a tyrant doubles with his words,
And fearfully equivocates, so we
Are forced to express our violent passions
In riddles, and in dreams, and leave the path
Of simple virtue, which was never made
To seem the thing it is not. Go, go, brag
You have left me heartless: mine is in your bosom;
I hope 'twill multiply love there: you do tremble.

Make not your heart so dead a piece of flesh,
To fear more than to love me; Sir, be confident.
What is it distracts you? This is flesh and blood, sir;
'Tis not the figure cut in alabaster
Kneels at my husband's tomb. Awake, awake, man,
I do here put off all vain ceremony,
And only do appear to you a young widow.
I used but half a blush in 't.

Bless Heaven this sacred Gordian, which let violence
Never untwine.
ANT. And may our sweet affections, like the spheres,
Be still in motion.
DUCH. Quickening, and make
The like soft music.

It would be difficult anywhere to surpass this scene, beginning with delicate raillery, half feigned to hide the passion underneath, ending in words that leave us doubtful with Cariola, 'whether the spirit of greatness, or of woman, reign most in her.'

The second act is the weakest and least interesting in the play. The sudden illness of the Duchess, accompanied by other untoward circumstances, raises suspicion at Court, and on the night of the child's birth a treacherous courtier, Bosola, who has sold himself to Prince Ferdinand and the Cardinal, picks up a scheme of its nativity which Antonio had carelessly dropped. By this clumsy expedient the brothers are made aware of their sister's condition, though still ignorant of the child's father. It seems as if the genius of Webster, overpowering when at its height, lost itself in the petty details of an intrigue which many inferior men might have rendered less cumbersome. His very wealth of imagination stifles him. The simplest and most apparent

things cannot be discovered without an altogether disproportionate outlay of time, tricks and trouble. It is like cracking a walnut with the proverbial sledge-hammer. Nor does he sufficiently explain the envy of the brothers, since, even had their sister died a widow, her son by her first husband (whose existence seems to have been conveniently forgotten further on), must, one would think, have succeeded to the dukedom. Of course it may be said that Webster wrote in the first place for the stage, and that on the stage effect is everything and causes matter little; but it is certainly strange that he took no pains to correct this and other inaccuracies of the same kind, when 'The perfect and exact Copy, with diverse things printed, that the length of the Play would not beare in the Presentment,' was afterwards given to the public.

A few years of happiness behind the curtain, and the tragedy begins again. The Duchess is now the mother of three children; strange rumours are rife about her in the Court, but nothing certain has yet been discovered, and no one suspects the cold, discreet Antonio. A charming scene of light, graceful banter, while Cariola is brushing her lady's hair, shows us how free they are from any sense of peril. While she is still speaking, Antonio steals away unnoticed into an inner chamber, taking Cariola with him, for the fun of making her angry.

Duch. Doth not the colour of my hair 'gin to change?
When I wax grey, I shall have all the Court
Powder their hair with arras to be like me.
You have cause to love me; I entered you into my heart
Before you would vouchsafe to call for the keys . . . .
For know, whether I am doomed to live or die,
I can do both like a prince.

Suddenly Ferdinand bursts upon her, dagger in hand. She meets his frantic and violent abuse with a quiet declaration that, as she is married already, it does not and cannot apply to her, and when his fury rather inrceases than subsides, she tries to reason with him in the gentle persuasive tones that would naturally befit a sister pleading with an angry brother. He is her twin brother, her old playfellow; surely to him she may speak as she would deign to speak to no one else. She herself gets a little angry, only a little, that he should insult her, as if she had committed some great crime by following the dictates of her nature:

> Why should only I,
> Of all the other princes of the world,
> Be cased up like an holy relic?
> I have youth and a little beauty.

It is difficult to explain Ferdinand's excessive brutality excepting on the ground that he is rather mad already, and the audience must be nearly as glad as the Duchess when at length he rushes from the room, bidding her expiate her dishonour by killing herself with the dagger that he leaves behind him. Her one thought is how to shield Antonio. She will dismiss him instantly and roughly from her service, following him afterwards in secret as soon as the coast is clear. She has just time to warn him before Bosola enters the room, and she begins to act—unfortunately to over-act—her part. Antonio, taking the cue, submits with well-assumed dignity, but the practised courtier, comprehending the whole situation at a glance, only allows him to escape that he may win the heart of the Duchess by his pretended indignation at the way in which she dismisses her

old servant. What could be more straightforward and uncourtierlike than his sharp reproof?—

> For know an honest statesman to a prince
> Is like a cedar planted by a spring.
> The spring bathes the tree's root, the grateful tree
> Rewards it with his shadow; you have not done so.

It gains the Duchess in a moment. With the royal generosity of a nature that can do nothing by halves, she at once confides to him everything, and yields to his treacherous counsel that she should go on pilgrimage to Loretto, the better to colour her flight. There is a cunning little touch of character in Cariola's objection:—

> In my opinion
> She were better progress to the baths at Lucca,
> Or go visit the Spa in Germany, for, if you will believe me,
> I do not like this jesting with religion,
> This feigned pilgrimage.

The maid is an excellent foil for the mistress everywhere; timid and conventional, where she is bold and independent; distrustful, when she is confident; able to hope, when she despairs; faithful and loving always, the very type of an ordinary nature desperately bound to follow a much higher one, which it cannot understand.

Of the many strange things in this play, nearly as original in its faults as in its beauty, the scene at Loretto is one of the strangest—being indeed no scene at all, but merely an elaborate dumb-show, by which the Cardinal and various other people decree the banishment of the Duchess and her family to the accompaniment

of 'a ditty,' the authorship of which is modestly disclaimed by Mr. John Webster in the margin. As it is not a very striking ditty, we are not surprised at this: but the marvellous pathos of the scene which follows can only heighten our wonder that he should have turned what might have been the central point of his drama into a mere bit of pantomime. Of course Bosola overtakes the fugitives, and the Duchess is made to accompany him back with two of her children, while Antonio and the eldest are suffered to escape.

DUCH. I know not which is best,
To see you dead or part with you. Farewell, boy,
Thou art happy that thou hast not understanding
To know thy misery; for all our wit
And reading brings us to a truer sense
Of sorrow. In the Eternal Church, sir,
I do hope we shall not part thus.
ANT. Oh, be of comfort.
Make patience a noble fortitude.
And think not how unkindly we are us'd,
Man (like to cassia) is prov'd best being bruis'd.
DUCH. Must I, like to a slave-born Russian,
Account it praise to suffer tyranny?
And yet, O Heaven! thy heavy hand is in't.
I have seen my little boy oft scourge his top,
And compar'd myself to't: nought made me e'er go right,
But Heaven's scourge-stick.
ANT. Do not weep.
Heaven fashion'd us of nothing, and we strive
To bring ourselves to nothing. Farewell, Cariola,
And thy sweet armful. If I do never see thee more,
Be a good mother to your little ones,
And save them from the tiger. Fare you well.
DUCH. Let me look upon you once more, for that speech

Came from a dying father. Your kiss is colder
Than that I have known an holy anchorite
Give to a dead man's skull.
ANT. My heart is turned to a heavy lump of lead,
With which I sound my danger. Fare you well.
DUCH. My laurel is all withered.

Can we not hear the very tones in which they speak, *les larmes dans la voix*, she with her books and flowers and little children, he with his masculine dislike of tears, and dim, heavy foreboding of worse evils to come? Surely the fable about a salmon and a dog-fish with which the act concludes must have been one of those things which were omitted during 'the presentment.' What actress would ever risk marring the effect of an intensely pathetic scene by such a queer bit of humour as this?—

A salmon, as she swam unto the sea,
Met with a dog-fish, who encounters her
With his rough language: Why art thou so bold
To mix thyself with our high state of floods?
Being no eminent courtier, but one
That for the calmest and fresh time of the year
Dost live in shallow rivers, rank'st thyself
With silly smelts and shrimps, and darest thou
Pass by our dog-ship without reverence?
O (Quoth the salmon) sister, be at peace,
Thank Jupiter we both have passed the net.
Our value never can be truly known
Till in the fisher's basket we be shown:
In the market then my price may be the higher,
Even when I am nearest to the cook and fire.
So to great men the moral may be stretched:
Men oft are valued high when they are most wretched.

We cannot imagine that the gifted Mrs. Betterton,

who played the part in 1678, ever allowed herself to go so far, though perhaps Master R. Sharpe, the first Duchess on record, may have managed it.

But now the plot thickens, the stage grows dark, the voices sink to a whisper, as the numbered hours pass quickly on to doom. Still the Duchess bears her imprisonment nobly, still her brother's cruelty has not availed to break her spirit. If she will not die naturally, she must be tortured to death; so much the better. Ferdinand comes to visit her in the darkness (having sworn never to see her face), and holds out, for her lips to kiss, a dead hand, which he feigns to be that of her husband. Bosola shows her 'behind a traverse' the bodies of Antonio and her children ('fram'd in wax, by the curious master in that quality, Vincentio Lauriola'). No cry, no lamentation does she utter. The sight freezes the blood in her veins, she cannot faint, nor weep away her ice-bound anguish; nothing but death can help her:—

Bos. Come, you must live. . . .
Duch. Good comfortable fellow,
Persuade a wretch that 's broke upon the wheel
To have all his bones new set, intreat him live
To be executed again. Who must despatch me?
I account this world a tedious theatre,
For I do play a part in 't 'gainst my will.
Bos. Come, be of comfort, I will save your life.
Duch. Indeed I have not leisure to attend
So small a business.
I will go pray. No: I 'll go curse.

She speaks wildly, yet with a certain restraint that never lets us forget she is 'Duchess of Malfi still.' Once before, when she was helping her husband to escape,

she quoted Tasso, now she remembers Portia. In her old artificial life alone in the Court, books had been her only reality; now in the tremendous realities of her own life they came back to her. Wonderful indeed is this picture of a mind hovering on the edge of madness, yet still intact:—

DUCH. What hideous noise was that?
CAR. 'Tis the wild concert
Of madmen, lady, which your tyrant brother
Hath placed about your lodging: this tyranny
I think was never practised till this hour.
DUCH. Indeed I thank him; nothing but noise and folly
Can keep me in my right wits, whereas reason
And silence make me stark mad; sit down,
Discourse to me some dismal tragedy.
CAR. O 'twill increase your melancholy.
DUCH. Thou art deceived,
To hear of greater grief would lessen mine.
This is a prison?
CAR. Yes: but thou shalt live
To shake this durance off.
DUCH. Thou art a fool.
The robin red-breast and the nightingale
Never live long in cages.
CAR. Pray dry your eyes.
What think you of, madam?
DUCH. Of nothing.
When I muse thus, I sleep.
CAR. Like a madman, with your eyes open?
DUCH. Dost thou think we shall know one another
In the other world?
CAR. Yes, out of question.
DUCH. O that it were possible we might
But hold some two days' conference with the dead,
From them I should learn somewhat I am sure

I never shall know here. I'll tell thee a miracle;
I am not mad yet, to my cause of sorrow.
Th' heaven o'er my head seems made of molten brass,
The earth of flaming sulphur, yet I am not mad:
I am acquainted with sad misery,
As the tanned galley-slave is with his oar;
Necessity makes me suffer constantly,
And custom makes it easy. Who do I look like now?

CAR. Like to your picture in the gallery;
A deal of life in show, but none in practice:
Or rather like some reverend monument
Whose ruins are even pitied.

Even yet she has not suffered enough. The madmen are let loose into the room to play their horrid gambols before her sleepless eyes, and deafen her with their wild songs and shrieks. As they are retiring, Bosola, disguised as an old man, enters to dig her grave. Apparently she recognises him after the first moment, for her dignified

Am I not thy duchess?

would seem to recall the former passages between them. She has lost all sense of fear—nay, even of that solemn awe which sometimes takes the place of fear at the last hour. Nothing shows the intensity of her grief more than her complete indifference:—

DUCH. And thou comest to make my tomb?
BOS. Yes.
DUCH. Let me be a little merry.
Of what stuff wilt thou make it?
BOS. Nay, resolve me first, of what fashion?
DUCH. What! do we grow fantastical in our death-bed?
Do we affect fashion in the grave?
BOS. Most ambitiously; princes' images on their tombs do not lie as they were wont, seeming to pray up to

heaven; but with their hands under their cheeks (as if they died of the toothache). They are not carved with their eyes fixed upon the stars; but as their minds were wholly bent upon the world, the self-same way they seem to turn their faces. . . .

[*A coffin, cords, and a bell, produced.*

Here is a present from your princely brother,
And may it arrive welcome, for it brings
Last benefit, last sorrow.

DUCH. Let me see it.
I have so much obedience in my blood,
I wish it in their veins to do them good.

BOS. This is your last presence chamber.

CAR. O my sweet lady.

DUCH. Peace; it affrights not me.

It is the 'nothing can hurt me now' of Marie Antoinette. Calmly she listens to her dirge, assisting at her own funeral before she dies. The naïve horror of it strikes chill, like a deep expression on the lips of a child:—

DIRGE

'Hark, now everything is still;
This screech-owl and the whistler shrill,
Call upon our dame aloud,
And bid her quickly don her shroud.
Much you had of land and rent;
Your length in clay's now competent.
A long war disturb'd your mind,
Here your perfect peace is sign'd.
Of what is 't fools make such vain keeping?
Sin, their conception; their birth, weeping.
Their life a general mist of error.
Their death a hideous storm of terror.
Strew your hair with powders sweet,
Don clean linen, bathe your feet;

And (the foul fiend more to check)
A crucifix let bless your neck.
'Tis now full tide 'tween night and day;
End your groan, and come away.

CAR. Hence, villains, tyrants, murderers: alas!
What will you do with my lady? Call for help.

DUCH. To whom? to our next neighbours? They are mad folks!
Farewell, Cariola.
I pray thee look thou giv'st my little boy
Some syrup for his cold; and let the girl
Say her pray'rs ere she sleep. Now what you please?
What death?

BOS. Strangling. Here are your executioners.

DUCH. I forgive them.
The apoplexy, catarrh, or cough o' the lungs,
Would do as much as they do.

BOS. Doth not death fright you?

DUCH. Who would be afraid on 't,
Knowing to meet such excellent company
In th' other world?

BOS. Yet methinks
The manner of your death should much afflict you;
This cord should terrify you.

DUCH. Not a whit.
What would it pleasure me to have my throat cut
With diamonds? or to be smothered
With cassia? or to be shot to death with pearls?
I know death hath ten thousand several doors
For men to take their exits; and 'tis found
They go on such strange geometrical hinges
You may open them both ways: any way (for Heaven's sake)
So I were out of your whispering. Tell my brothers
That I perceive death—now I 'm well awake—
Best gift is they can give or I can take.

I would fain put off my last woman's fault;
I'd not be tedious to you.
Pull, and pull strongly, for your able strength
Must pull down heaven upon me.
Yet stay, heaven's gates are not so highly arched
As princes' palaces; they that enter there
Must go upon their knees. Come, violent death,
Serve for mandragora to make me sleep.
Go tell my brothers, when I am laid out,
They then may feed in quiet.

[*They strangle her kneeling. Ferdinand enters.*

FERD. Is she dead?

BOS. She is what you would have her.
Fix your eye here.

FERD. Constantly.

BOS. Do you not weep?
Other sins only speak, murder shrieks out.
The element of water moistens the earth,
But blood flies upwards and bedews the heavens.

FERD. Cover her face—mine eyes dazzle—she died young.

She was beyond fear, but her woman's nerves remained to her; she felt they must give way if the strain lasted much longer. She had borne the cries of the madmen, but she could not bear this 'whispering' about her; it made her nervously eager for the last horrible moment. Rest, rest was all she wanted; let them give it her quickly.

A modern writer would have had the play end here in the silence and darkness of the chamber of death, but Webster and Co. were not artists in the modern sense of the word. Their villains were not mere bits of wickedness contrived to throw into relief the virtues of the innocent and then sink back into the nothingness from which they came, but flesh and blood, and as such to be

punished, at the risk of outraging the moral feelings of the audience. Furthermore, they saw that after any dreadful deed the world went on its way very much as usual; that a curtain did not fall for ever on the perpetrators of it; that the vacant place was filled up somehow; and it was this great truth of continuity which they sought to impress by leading our thoughts on to the future. It shows a change in the temper of the English people that the last scene of *Hamlet* should never be acted now. In those old days the fall of a monarch was nothing compared to the fall of monarchy, which would have thrown too deep a shadow even for tragedy. At any cost there must be a successor to the throne. *The Duchess of Malfi* fulfils both these conditions. It would be tedious to follow the web of plot within plot which gradually brings about the mutual murder and assassination of the Cardinal's mistress, of Antonio, of the Cardinal himself, of Ferdinand, and of Bosola, but there is one exquisite scene in which Antonio, walking unconsciously near to his wife's grave, is made to hear the echo taking her voice:—

DEL. Hark, the dead stones seem to have pity on you,
And give you good counsel.
ANT. Echo, I will not talk with thee,
For thou art a dead thing.
ECHO. Thou art a dead thing.
ANT. My Duchess is asleep now,
And her little ones, I hope, sweetly. O Heaven,
Shall I never see her more?
ECHO. Never see her more.
ANT. I marked not one repetition of the Echo
But that; and on a sudden a clear light
Presented me a face folded in sorrow!
DEL. Your fancy merely.

How well the old playwrights understood that sense of foreboding, the very existence of which many people in a less robust age are willing to call in question!

The Cardinal's last soliloquy over his Dante has a touch of grimly irresistible humour that reminds one of the fantastic devils of some ancient German artist:—

> I am puzzled in a question about hell.
> He says in hell there 's one material fire,
> And yet it shall not burn all men alike.
> Lay him by. How tedious is a guilty conscience!
> When I look into the fishponds in my garden
> Methinks I see a thing armed with a rake
> That seems to strike at me.

On the whole, my Lord Ferdinand, with his laugh, 'like a deadly cannon that lightens ere it smokes,' is excelled in wickedness by my Lord Cardinal, who never laughs at all. Ferdinand had the grace to go mad after his sister's death at any rate, but the Cardinal seems to have felt no ill effects whatever, except the trifling little vision aforesaid.

Quiet and brief are the closing words of this great tragedy. No sentimental moralising, no weak appeal to pity, no feeble buttressing about of virtue with pasteboard-angels; by her own right she stands.

> Mal. Oh, sir, you come too late.
> Del. I heard so, and
> Was arm'd for 't ere I came. Let us make noble use
> Of this great ruin, and join all our force
> To establish this young hopeful gentleman
> In 's mother's right. These wretched eminent things
> Leave no more fame behind 'em than should one
> Fall in a frost, and leave his print in snow;

As soon as the sun shines, it ever melts
Both form and matter; I have ever thought
Nature doth nothing so great for great men
As when she 's pleas'd to make them lords of truth.
Integrity of life is fame's best friend,
Which nobly (beyond death) shall crown the end.

We know almost nothing of the life and death of John Webster. No monument, however humble, rises over his tomb, no *hic jacet* points to his last resting-place. It was Thomas Middleton who, with a true prescience of the things that pass away and the things that endure, wrote over his friend's 'maisterpeece':—

Thy Epitaph only the Title bee,
Write Dutchesse, that will fetch a teare for thee.

[1886]

ON NOISES[1]

It is an open question whether musicians are fonder of noise than other people. They themselves would, perhaps, answer it in the negative. 'So noisy!' is considered one of their very severest verdicts; and if an unmusical person happens to like something they disapprove of, they will often give this as the reason, being apparently of opinion that noise has nothing to do with music, properly so called. Yet what is music itself but the art of making a refined kind of noise, subject to certain rules? Music which can be only taken in by the eye, and is audible to the mind alone, remains unintelligible excepting to a few. No doubt those few hear melodies more wonderful than any that ever were 'by mortal finger struck.' I have heard a composer say that the more keenly he felt the delight of writing out the music that was in him, the more keenly he disliked the instruments, which were a kind of unhappy mean between the pure beauty of his own conception, and the ignorance of those who could only be made to know it through their ears. We need not much regret the deafness of Beethoven; and it is most unnecessary to pity Sebastian Bach because his greatest work was never performed during his lifetime. Still, it remains true that to the world in general music that is not heard is nothing. It might just as

[1] From *The Musical World*, 1886.

well not exist. Certainly this is hard on the composer. He cannot speak to us directly, as every other artist can; he must speak through others, and his best speech may fail, because others (or their instruments) have not good voices. It is just conceivable that in future ages men may come to read music as many of them have come to read plays, and to say, with a superior air, 'Oh, do you really like to go and hear *Fidelio*? It is so vulgarised by ——— (the Tietjens of the period), I much prefer to study it at home.' That will be a golden age for composers, if any chance to exist; but more likely they will all have disappeared just as the ungrateful world is ready to do them the most absolute justice. Meanwhile, let us make noises, and be happy. It is such a nice, human thing—noise! Surely it was a happy dispensation which married it to the most abstract of all the arts. There are times when it is inconvenient; there are times when it is agonising. The squeak of a slate pencil, a pig, a violin in the hands of a young gentleman of tender age—one's nerves thrill at the bare recollection.

Still, taking it all in all, what should we do without it? Even the squeak of the violin is dear to the heart of the young gentleman who perpetrates it. Even the pig finds it a relief to his feelings to express them in that unutterably hideous sound. The slate pencil alone would seem to be equally hated of gods and men. People who are not mothers can scarcely be expected to feel it, but it is actually asserted on credible authority, that the sweetest music to a mother's ear—even if she has a good one—is the cry of her newborn infant. And the cries of people in the streets, who were not infants, delighted that quietest of spirits, Charles Lamb.

True, there was one man, Schopenhauer, the grim

philosopher, who hated women, who hated noises also—did not merely pretend to hate them as some do, but hated them with a good, honest, downright hatred. He said they murdered his thoughts. He accused them, also, of murdering the thoughts of five other great people, viz., Brentano, Kant, Goethe, Lichtenstein, and Jean Paul. He went so far as to say that complaints of them were to be found in the biographies or personal recollections of almost all great writers. His description of the sufferings he underwent from the cracking of whips would melt the heart, even of a cabman. He said it cut right through his meditations, like a sword dividing the head from the body. 'That such an infamous thing should be tolerated in any town is barbarous and unjust in the extreme; all the more, as it could easily be avoided by ordering the police to see that there was a knot at the end of every lash. . . . If I were in authority, I would establish a permanent *nexus idearum* between the cracking of whips and flogging, in the heads of the drivers.' Poor Schopenhauer! Was it not enough for him to see everything *en noir*, but must he hear it *en noir* also? The violent slamming of doors also troubled him greatly. He would have sympathised with that printer who, not being acquainted with the expression 'banging gales,' as applied to rent, misprinted a sentence in one of the newspapers, 'The cause of all the mischief in Ireland is *the banging gates*.'

Infinite silence hath a magnificent sound also in the mouth of Carlyle, but if, in a future life he should be found inhabiting the Moon Circle of Paradise, that absolutely soundless sphere, he will perhaps have modified his opinions. Outside our own selves, there is nothing so pleasant, so genial, so friendly, as a noise. The

sounds, even more than the sights we are accustomed to; the familiar voices, even more than familiar faces, pass into our very being, and become one with us. Those who have lived by the sea, or in some great city, cannot forget the strange murmur wherever they may go. They listen for it instinctively; they miss it, scarcely knowing what they miss, till they return to it again. Sometimes they will tell you they cannot sleep, *because* everything is so quiet. And then, there is the romantic side of noise. Echo will lend it the curious charm that reflection lends to an ordinary object. The sighing of the wind among the trees, the whisper of the waves in a shell—how these have set a poet's fancy going. Others have loved the crackling of the fire on a frosty evening, the monody of the tea-kettle, the chirp of the cricket on the hearth. But if there was one who more than any felt the full charm of all those different noises, little and great, which make the chorus of life, that one was the first musician of his day—the first composer, too, who claimed distinctly for himself the title of poet. The whirr of a spinning-wheel, the tap of a cobbler's hammer, the cracked notes of an old watchman, he did not fear to spoil his daintiest music with such things as these. He loved the ringing strokes of the sledge upon the anvil; his burning thoughts kept tune with them. Prisoning the fire in his wand, like another Prometheus, he let the flames burst forth again to make a rosy ring around his sleeping lady, or flashed them in lightning through the tempests that only he could raise. Not in vain had he watched the Wild Huntsman, and heard the rain fall lightly on the forest leaves; and to the storm and stress of nature without, joining the storm and stress of the fiery nature within him, he sent his Walkyries riding abroad upon

the very wings of the wind. The rush and dash of waves, the calm flowing of a river, the gradual rising of a flood—who could portray it as he could? Yet, perhaps, the dearest thing to him was the noise of birds singing, the hum of insects whirring, stirring, buzzing in a wood. 'Under the greenwood tree, Who loves to lie with me?' sang Shakespeare. It was Wagner who loved to lie there too, and listen. Avaunt, ye geographers! Siegfried and Orlando wandered in the same forest.

[1888]

MORE WORLDS THAN ONE[1]

'Tea, in cups with handles and saucers, was handed round by servants in black dress suits, with white ties.'

Who would have thought it possible to describe a tea-party in a new and striking manner? Yet Miss Bird has done it. If she had lived when tea cost nineteen shillings a pound, she could not have pictured a gathering in honour of that beverage with more originality. We almost feel as if we were reading about something we had never heard of before. We are in Japan with her for the moment. European tea is a strange and foreign thing. We are not accustomed to it in cups with saucers and handles to them.

People who are at all sympathetic by nature are often curiously influenced by their surroundings. It is said that an Englishman who has lived long in the East, away from his fellow-countrymen, sinks at last into the very depths of Oriental degradation. Lady Hester Stanhope was an odd person. As things were, Mr. Kinglake enjoyed his visit to her, but he could hardly have enjoyed it anywhere but in the East. Live in a Cathedral town for a week and you will come to feel that the Dean is the most important person in England, and that the one object of life is not to be late for Evensong at the Minster.

[1] From *The Reflector*, March 1888.

But these are only temporary phases of existence. We may go once in a way to Japan, the desert, or the Cathedral town, but they are not ours to frequent as we will, whenever we get too dull for ourselves, and are driven to seek refreshment elsewhere. What matter? there are three whole worlds at our disposal: the world that is, of which we know something; the world that will be, of which we know nothing; and the world that never was and never will be, about which we know everything. Some live entirely in one, some in another; the happiest people have the range of all three. At one time or the other we have most of us inhabited the third. We have made fortunes and friends in it, we have married wives in it, we hold a great deal of Spanish property there. Sometimes we go thither under feigned names. There have been Dukes of Wellington who never fought at Waterloo, and bloodless victories over nobody and nothing, the results of which were unspeakably gratifying to the winner of them. There have been picture-galleries, theatres, libraries, racecourses in that world, the like of which was never seen below. It is a lovely world, all rose and rainbow colour. Everything is possible there, and everybody succeeds. It is a kind of practical workaday heaven, to which we go without even the expense of being good beforehand. Many of the women there are men and all men are heroes. The right person does the right thing always. There are no fogs.

Unreality attracts certain minds, as money attracts the miser, rank the baseborn, heroic death the young. The unreal denizens of that world are to some people dearer than flesh and blood. Not to all. 'So natural, so *real*,' say the people who live in world No. 1, when they read story-books; but they speak falsely. Life is not a story-

book, or no stories need ever be written. Who wants to read when he is at the play? There is nothing so inconsistent, so inartistic as reality. Humorous it may be, and pathetic—more humorous and more pathetic than any story that was ever written—but quite without that strange power of pleasing and satisfying, which is the property of things and people that never were. A may die, B may marry, C may get an appointment in China; but the health of dear Di Vernon never gives me one day's uneasiness, Rose Jocelyn will let me ride with her when I will, Dorothea Brooke is always at home to me. It may be thought that this society is too exclusively feminine. The lovers of these ladies might no doubt be as interesting as they are, if I cared to visit them; but I do not. A feeling of jealousy comes over me. I know I could have made every one of the sweet creatures (and how many more besides?) happier than that conceited fop Frank Osbaldistone, that free-and-easy weathercock Will Ladislaw, that irreproachable tailor-gentleman Evan Harrington. Luckily there is safety in numbers. I sometimes pass them all in review, wondering which I should have chosen had fortune given me a choice in any world except the third. Beatrice frightens me a little, but when I think of her at the other end of my dinner-table, Browning, Leighton, and Mr. Gladstone listening delightedly to her remarks, I am a proud and happy man. Rosalind would be perfection for a week in the New Forest at Easter. Portia would mean exile. One cannot imagine her out of Belmont; but she would be a charming winter wife. Miss Harriet Byron is too good for me. I do not aspire to such a saint. But the naughty and fascinating Lady Charlotte G. might take me to Church to-morrow, even after I had fully con-

sidered the awful responsibility of becoming Sir Charles Grandison's brother-in-law. Elizabeth Bennet I cannot away with. I would not have married her to save my life, or on a desert island. Emilia in *The Mysteries of Udolpho* had, as Sir Walter Scott remarks, too great a tendency to drop into verses addressed to a bat. Nor is it possible to care much about his own heroines, excepting always the aforesaid Di Vernon, and Green Mantle in *Redgauntlet*, to whom I would willingly offer, in the words of Heine—

'Das wenig Herz das mir gelassen
Ihre Vergängerin im Reich.[1]

[1] 'The Greeks, sir, had a great respect for the Number Three,' said my friend, when I read him this essay. He also quoted a remark of Oliver Wendell Holmes about length, breadth, and height.

[1888]

THE MAKING OF HEROINES[1]

I BELIEVE I am quite capable of being a hero: but so far as I know, I am not one; and I want to have some good way suggested to me of occupying that desirable position. After all, this, if any, is the age when Sancho Panza (or Mrs. Panza for that matter) seems to have a good chance of enjoying, at all events for a time, the position and reputation which even Don Quixote found so hard to obtain in days when chivalry had already gone out, and interviewers had not yet come in. Everybody must have noticed that celebrated people nowadays, especially celebrated ladies, have nearly as many lives as a Kilkenny cat. They are born, they are married, they die over and over again, in the columns of newspapers and in the pages of biographers. Even before their natural decease, they very often live in a world of looking-glass, which reflects all their most important actions—or their least important, as the case may be—for the benefit of the outside world.

It was not always so. Mrs. William Shakespeare's sufferings may, in her different sphere, have equalled Mrs. Carlyle's, and she may have been just as cross and just as clever, but no one of her husband's friends was entrusted with the unpleasant duty of describing her conjugal adventures for the edification of posterity. We

[1] From *The Reflector*, March 1888.

know next to nothing of those much-to-be-pitied young women, the daughters of Milton, and what little we do know does not redound to their credit. Had they but lived a couple of hundred years later, we should, no doubt, have possessed an interesting work entitled 'The Real John Milton,' of which they were the suffering heroines. Let all downtrodden wives and daughters of the *genus irritabile vatum* take courage! Their day was long in coming, but it has come at last. A strong character must that be indeed which can stand the glare of light thus flung on it from all sides. The results of different treatment are sometimes as perceptible as those in varying portraits of the same person. One artist is perfectly convinced that the eyes were pale blue; another would go to the stake for the opinion that they were dark brown. It is a rare thing when the subject is too striking to admit of any mistake. Mrs. Gaskell, Mr. Reid, and Mr. Birrell are three very different people, but Charlotte Brontë is much the same in all their pictures. It has been wittily said, that every individual stands really for three—himself, the self he thinks himself, and the self somebody else thinks him. She seems to have been one of the very few who cherish no illusions on their own account and permit none to be cherished by others. She had one good strong self, and she stuck to it, and stamped it indelibly upon her every word and action.

What befalls celebrated people invariably after their death, and frequently during their life, befalls commonplace people only at rare intervals and at certain crises. Few of us have strength of mind enough to make heroes of ourselves, but once or twice at least, in the course of our existence, events make heroes of us in our own despite. The first Mrs. Dombey, had she 'made an

effort,' would never have been the first Mrs. Dombey. Circumstances, we know, rendered it impossible, and those circumstances made her immortal; but she is only cited as an extreme case. Woman is, as a rule, quicker to take advantage of her life than man; she is less passive. Man at a crisis—unless it be a crisis of war—is a stupid thing. He either makes a fool of himself, or allows the world to make a fool of him, from which fate woman is preserved by her innate self-respect, and by a certain capacity which she possesses for making the most of emotion. A bridegroom is either the silliest or the most miserable of mortals, but marriage can always make a heroine out of the least heroic of women. She is the centre of attraction, for the time being. Everything is forgiven her, on account of the ordeal through which she has to pass. Her married friends pity her. Her unmarried friends envy either her or the bridegroom, as the case may be. Her will is law. Her prospects and her presents are the subject of conversation among all her acquaintance. She is obliged to take the opinion of the whole household, from Grandmamma down to the lady's maid, as to the fit of her wedding-gown. No one spares her blushes about the ring. Every one says 'Poor thing!'—if the height of the bride does not absolutely forbid it, 'Poor little thing!' The borderland between Miss and Mrs., especially the extreme verge of the borderland, has an odd fascination. Some people, like Racine, always cry at a wedding. Sir Thomas Browne, we know, thought it a far more solemn thing than death. It is, at any rate, a crisis, whether from the lady's maid's point of view or Racine's.

Some are made heroes of (most unwillingly) by a fire a burglary, a mad dog, or the small-pox. It is a mistake

to suppose that success ever makes heroes. A certain element of melancholy is almost always needful. The Archbishop of Canterbury is not a hero, unless he has to go to prison. The Chancellor of the Exchequer is not a hero, unless he is compelled to offer up his lofty position on the altar of his country.

It is appalling to think how full the world is of intermittent, involuntary, nameless and numberless heroes and heroines. I know at least nineteen, and my acquaintance is limited. I have never yet been a hero in my own person, but I comfort myself with the old saying, 'While there is life, there is hope.'

[1891]

TRAVELLERS' TALES[1]

That the Spring is the season for wandering, who that has ever understood the signs of the times will doubt? The Winter is house-keeping time—house-keeping time in town, if possible—with fires, and lamps, and books. The Summer is garden time, among the roses and strawberries. The Autumn is too sad to think about at all. But the Spring is the time to wander. 'Try something new!' says the old earth, and puts out all her new flowers and leaves to tempt us, and to fill us with strange melancholy, that is more than half longing—a kind of homesickness for distant lands. The very air tells us, in soft balmy whispers, how the myrtles and orange-trees are blossoming over the sea; the swallows come again, from far, far away, 'und ich, ich schnüre den Sack und wandere.'

> Once more the Heavenly Power
> Makes all things new.

The old earth has something of the tenderness and beauty of a young mother.

There are few things more delightful than travelling, to those who really enjoy it. But people are born travellers, as they are born poets, painters and musicians. 'Thursday's bairn hath far to go,' says the old rhyme, and Thursday's bairn, and Thursday's bairn only, enjoys

[1] From *The Monthly Packet*, August 1891.

it. Some men might go from the world's beginning north (I do not know why, but I am quite sure the world began north) to the world's end south, and never get out of England the whole time. For unless you travel in the spirit as well as in the body, you get but a little way; and there are people (*Prue and I* for example) who, scarcely stirring from their own fireside, have yet gone further than many a ''mercial' that knows *Bradshaw* by heart. Even an undeveloped genius for travelling will do wonders. What did not the hero and heroine of *Their Wedding Journey* accomplish, by the mere determination to treat their native land as if it were a foreign country?

What fine fellows are the great explorers, from Columbus to Greeley! With what magnificent chivalry do they go forth to fight the sun, the sea, the snow, that they may win new lands, new light for the world! My lady Science hath her martyrs among them, not saints indeed, but men as grand, as brave and as enduring. The traveller is certainly not a martyr; yet doth he feel a little sting of the same spirit within him, and his small discoveries are to him an America. For to travel anywhere intelligently is to discover for yourself, if not for any one else; and the Undiscovered Country lies not only in the heart of Africa, nor round the Poles. Who, for instance, discovered Yorkshire before Charlotte Brontë?

There are people who ought to be paid to travel, they do it so well. Miss Bird[1] is one of these. She is such

[1] Now, however, this lady has a more than dangerous rival in the author of *A Social Departure*. The vivid, yet reposeful effect of certain aspects of Eastern colouring,—the freshness, and the familiarity of certain aspects of Eastern life,—are described with still greater delicacy in a small, unpretending volume, recently published, called *Pilgrims in Palestine*.

excellent company in Japan, that we could almost find it in our hearts, even at the end of her two fat volumes, to wish she had stayed there a month longer. Hers are no sentimental journeys; she does not burst into lyrics, and nobody ever tries to murder her; but she has good eyes, and she uses them. And then Miss Bird is such a charming name for a traveller! Fate clearly had something to do with it. Heresy though it be to say so, her travels are much better reading than Goethe's. The strange influence that Italy exercised over him is to be learnt from other sources; but if he fled to her like a lover, he described her like the coldest of connoisseurs. He—and George Eliot after him—seem to have been afflicted with a tendency to rival the best guide-books in their possession that is perfectly maddening. If it were not for *Kennst du das Land*, and for the pictures of Florence in *Romola*, they certainly might have been paid to stay at home. One sighs to think what poor Frau von Stein had to wade through, every time that she got a letter. Heine, on the other hand, was an ideal traveller. Perhaps the nightingales sing a thought too often, and the moonlight is now and then excessive, but still his is the magic music, and whither he goes we follow him, as the children followed the Pied Piper of Hamelin. Some people, in whom one might have suspected the latent traveller, disappoint one terribly. Of this number is Hawthorne, whose note-books are redeemed from the utter flatness of Goethe's and George Eliot's only by those occasional odd touches that make everything that he wrote characteristic. What does he think of in the Louvre? He does not seem to care for one of the great pictures. He passes 'Mona Lisa' by—'Mona Lisa,' whom he alone of all men, since Leonardo, could have

understood. Instead, he fancies grimly, what a scene there would be, if all the dead came back to claim his or her own relic,—the dagger—the bracelet—the brooch,—from its particular glass case.

French, Germans, Americans, see things with very different eyes. Kinglake is the most English of travellers. The chivalry, the detestation of humbug, the quiet, practical, foolhardy courage of a typical English gentleman, are all represented in *Eothen*. Who that has ever read that wonderful book, can forget the whirl of feeling about the Virgin Mary—the passing of the other Englishman on camel-back, in the desert, without a word,—the wilful risk of life, merely for the excitement of staying in a plague-stricken city? These things are, in their way, national. Perhaps only the English can understand them. Laurence Oliphant, at his best, gives one the same delightful sensations.

'There is a sense, of course, in which all true books are books of travel.' So writes the traveller, whom, of all others, he that goes forth with eyes eager to see, would choose for his companion. Modestine was a happy animal, if she had but known it. *Treasure Island* is a good book, but some people would give ten *Treasure Islands* for one *Inland Voyage*. It seems almost a pity, that any one who can describe real life thoroughly well should ever do anything else. There are so many who can fly—a little; so few who know how to talk, or how to manage a boat in print. Here is at last a writer of fiction, whose journeying is something more than an inferior episode in his novels. He is himself his own best hero; we would rather know what he thinks and feels, we would rather hear what grieved, amused, endangered him, than anything else that he can tell us.

Dickens, who could make a hero, tragic or comic, out of any one, had not this faculty, or had it not in perfection. In the Italian notes, for instance, we cannot but feel that he would rather be telling, and we would much rather be hearing, a story. Either he bored himself, or else he did not pay us the compliment of being quite frank with us, and put on spectacles, when he wanted to see things for the public. So, too, Scott's diary, deeply interesting when he speaks of himself in private, becomes positively dull when he takes a voyage—I suppose, because he then wrote consciously for others.

Stevenson is very matter-of-fact about his mental experiences. Apparently—

> He thinks it something less than vain,
> What has been done, to do again.

All roads, it is said, lead to Rome; but Robert Louis's do not. He goes to odd little out-of-the-way places, and he goes in queer ways of his own, that are not in the least dangerous or extraordinary, but only very amusing. He takes a donkey or a canoe. The deliberate cheerfulness with which he surmounts every difficulty rises unconsciously to the level of courage, and the reader is surprised and altogether delighted to find that, while he thought he was merely laughing, he is really admiring. And then Stevenson has plucked out the heart of the matter. 'To travel hopefully,' says he, 'is better than to arrive.'

[1906]

MRS. GASKELL[1]

Almost a hundred years have passed away since Mrs. Gaskell was born, and the lustre of her fame is yet undimmed. She was no wild poet of love among the moors like Charlotte Brontë, no learned professor of the analytical arts and sciences like George Eliot; but the special graces of womanhood are hers rather than theirs, and it was not without reason that Dickens called her his 'Scheherazade,' for the innate gift of storytelling is greater in her than in her sisters. Charlotte Brontë swept the world away in the storm of her passion; George Eliot conquered it with the power of understanding; Mrs. Gaskell forced it to weep for pity, charmed it with the sunny wit of a lady who was never in all her life mistaken for a man, even when she signed herself Cotton Mather Mills, Esq. She did not write at first because she must, but because she would. The sufferings of the poor had entered into her soul like iron. She felt them as Dickens and Kingsley felt them; she threw her strength into a mighty effort for peace—not on compulsion—for Christianity, not for compromise. The fairness and sweetness of *Mary Barton* make it the noble thing it is. She never for an instant would admit that bitterness could be right. She did not justify the bitterness of the poor, though she pointed

[1] From the *Times Literary Supplement*, 14th September 1906.

out to the rich what had caused that bitterness. It is not only by taking a gun and shooting some one that a man breaks the commandment, 'Thou shalt do no murder': yet, if he breaks it thus, he makes himself the equal of the man who has let another starve, and both alike must pay in blood the awful penalty of hatred, both alike must be brought to acknowledge that love is the only power that can rule the world. A strange subject, this of 'forgiveness.' With one sternly ironical reference, 'Oh, Orestes! you would have made a very tolerable Christian of the nineteenth century!' Mrs. Gaskell takes us back to the dead-alive conviction of the ancient world, still walking ghost-like in the midst of us, that justice is vengeance; in the light of her own unquenchable faith she leads us on to see that justice is forgiveness. She never imagined anything more true to human nature at its highest than this bending of the spirit of one heart-broken father to the spirit of another, in stricken, reverent submission to the Father of all.

Perhaps it was reserved for a woman to show that, in women guiding their conduct by the Bible, forgiveness may become, as it rarely becomes in men, an instinct. Electra, in the old world, urged on Orestes; the idea of forgiving her mother never entered her heart. Desdemona not only forgave the Moor her death, but tried, with her last breath, to take the guilt of it upon herself. Shakespeare clearly held that, when a woman loves, forgiveness is involuntary, she does not even think of it; but what would Desdemona have felt towards any one who had killed Othello? Isabella's forgiveness of Angelo, the would-be murderer of her brother, in *Measure for Measure*, is the result of thought, of pity for his betrothed, of resolution—it is not instinctive.

'They'll know it sooner or later, and repent sore if they 've hanged him for what he never did,' replied Job.

'Ay, that they will. Poor soul! May God have mercy on them when they find out their mistake!'

So says Jane Wilson, mother of the accused Jem in *Mary Barton*, without any consciousness of the sublimity of her words. Mrs. Gaskell might have taken for her motto the name of one of Tolstoy's most delicate short stories, 'Where love is, there is God also!' In her unending compassion, in her love of the gentleness of the frail and the old, in her clear condemnation of violence as a remedy, her scorn of military prowess, she resembles the great Russian more closely than any of her countrymen. But he was still to come; and, though she afterwards withdrew them—it may be from a sensitive feeling that they revealed too much of her inmost heart—she found in Uhland's words a link to fasten to her work the memory of two spirits.

Mary Barton was begun, by her husband's earnest desire, to relieve her own mental sufferings after the death of her little son. Terrible indeed must have been the thoughts from which the thoughts that gave it birth were a relief! The men and women who were writing about the dreadful year of '48 had great courage. They did not fly from the most agonising problems of life and conduct. They stood up and faced them—not with the indifferent calm of the student, careful only to note and compare, but with the enthusiasm of the Church militant. They recognised the fact that these problems, although so troublesome, are for the most part expressed in simple terms. They were not so much concerned about the form of religion a man ought to belong to, or which woman he ought to have married, as they were

about whether he did or did not understand the words of Christ—whether he was or was not doing his duty in that state of life unto which it had pleased God to call him. Humour—imagination—eloquence—they did not use these gifts for their own solace, they pressed them into the service of those who had none. 'To my thinking, them that is strong in any of God's gifts is meant to help the weak!' Job Legh expresses the thought of all the leading writers of that time. As the sonnet, which had been as a lute for lovers, became in Milton's hands a trumpet, so the novel, which had been once (and was to be again) a toy, became in theirs a sword with which to fight in the cause of the oppressed. Away—but only for a time—went the dashing, splashing fellow with the white plume, that we are all so fond of! Thackeray wrote a novel without a hero; Dickens took a child for his; Charlotte Brontë made a heroine out of a poor little plain governess; George Eliot showed how much more gentlemanly than a gentleman a carpenter might be. Mrs. Gaskell, more daring than any of them, rivalling Victor Hugo's choice of a convict, as she lay sick and sad upon her sofa, took an assassin. She called the book at first 'John Barton'; and of the living, moving characters on that wonderful canvas he is the first to arrest our attention, the last that we could forget. Small wonder is it that an Oldham labourer should have taken his children regularly to look at the house where she lived who thus could read the heart of the working man, who thus could turn all hearts towards him! From the moment when we meet him at the stile and he takes Jane Wilson's baby, to the moment when he dies, forgiven, in the arms of the man whose only son he has murdered, loving and pitying sympathy follows him

step by step. Some of his words strike on the conscience now like hammers :—

'When I was a little chap they taught me to read, and then they never gave no books.'

'It's not much I can say for myself in t' other world. God forgive me ; but I can say this, I would fain have gone after the Bible rules, if I 'd seen folk credit it.'

'I would go through hell fire, if I could but get free from sin at last.'

'It was not long I tried to live Gospel-wise, but it was liker heaven than any other bit of earth has been.'

Apart from its own intrinsic interest, the first considerable work of a great novelist awakens our curiosity for the hints it may contain of future excellence. Jem's first sight of John Barton after his disappearance, going to the pump to fetch a jug of water—that vision of the murdering, not the murdered man, haunts memory like the spectre that it really is. The woman who wrote this could not have found any great difficulty in writing, as she afterwards did, one of the best ghost stories in existence, the 'Old Nurse's Story,' and the finer parts of that unequal study, 'The Poor Clare.' We might have known, too, that no hero of hers could be really base. She held a brief for the heroism of everybody as against the heroism of a favoured few. We might have known that her heroines would be, for the most part, maidenly, pretty, wayward creatures, with their hearts in the right place. 'It is but a day sin I were young,' says the old woman, trying to comfort the heartbroken girl in 'Half a Life-time Ago' with the reflection that life is short ; and the poetry of this, and of many other faithful servants, may be, to some slight extent, foreshadowed by the old nurse in *Mary Barton*. But we could never

have foreseen the great ladies of the old *régime*, the doctors, the ministers, the enchanting spinsterhood presided over by Miss Galindo and Miss Deborah Jenkyns, who were to charm us in *Cranford*, in the far less popular but just as perfect picture, *My Lady Ludlow*, and once again in *Wives and Daughters*. Mr. Gray, in the second of these three works, meets and beats Amos Barton, Mr. Gilfil, and Mr. Tryan on their own ground. We say it with hesitation — we are not unaware of the indignant protest likely to follow—but still we assert that we should greatly have preferred his ministrations. And if, for ourselves, we had the joy and privilege of calling in a doctor from the realms of fiction whenever we are not quite well, it would be Dr. Gibson, and not the husband of Rosamund Lydgate, for whom we sent. There is barely the shadow of a doctor, there are no clergy at all, in *Mary Barton*. Perhaps the symmetrical scheme of the work, the strong, sharp contrast of employers and employed, did not admit of people in an intermediary position. The *grande dame*, naturally, did not exist in Manchester.

It might be, if we had to choose our favourite character from this long gallery, My Lady Ludlow whom we should select. There are no such ladies now. You might search England through, from end to end, and never find the like of this lovely, beneficent little old despot. What need of heroes, or of heroines either, if she be there? There are certain words that never must be mentioned in the ancient house where she lives, with the five 'young gentlewomen' who are to her instead of her dead daughters, and the twenty old servants to do the work of the twenty other old servants who are too old to do any work at all. 'Musk' is one of these words.

She cannot abide such a vulgar and common odour. Lavender and woodroffe are her favourite perfumes—lavender and woodroffe and the scent of decaying strawberry leaves in the autumn, noted by Bacon for its fragrance, and cherished by her because only a nose of gentle birth can detect it. What would she have done in these days of Board Schools and of cheap literature, she who had sheltered the victims of the French Revolution and believed that it would happen over again in England if the children of her tenants were taught to read! How beautiful she is in her gracious tyranny, in her courtly, determined opposition, in the rigid reserve of her strong feelings, in the endless outgoing of her generous heart to those who are in distress! Etiquette itself becomes a kind of worship with such a centre. The sorrow that plunged the village into mourning comes to us like a personal sorrow when Mr. Gray goes up to her to break to her the death of her only son—'and she had been the joyful mother of nine!' The sky is darkened because she sits, a whole month long, in a black room, with lamps and candles, seeing no one except her maid, reading nothing except the names of all her children on the first page of the family Bible. We breathe again as soon as she comes back to rule her little kingdom. When she conferred a favour it was always as though she asked it; and she 'never forgave by halves.' When she sends for a destitute, one-legged sailor to manage her property we tremble for her justification, we feel she must be right, we trust her as she trusts herself and him, through all the mistakes of the first year. Certainly it was hard upon her that a Baptist baker, a person of no social standing whatever, should so contrive that his

fields were in much better condition than hers. Even Miss Galindo only partially softened her heart towards this person.

'I daresay,' said Miss Galindo, 'he would have been born a Hanbury, or a lord, if he could. . . . It was his misfortune, not his fault, that he was not a person of quality by birth.'

'That's very true,' said my lady, after a pause for consideration, 'but, although he was a baker, he might have been a Churchman.'

Dear Miss Galindo! She 'often thought of the postman's bringing her a letter as one of the pleasures she should miss in heaven'—a reflection which occurred to Dr. Johnson also, when he was talking to Bozzy. But it will never do to begin about Mrs. Gaskell's old maids. They are as inexhaustible as Rembrandt's Jews. Let us end rather with a friendly counsel to every one who does not already own these 'unappropriated blessings' to purchase them at once.

QUEEN ELIZABETH[1]

Queen Elizabeth, when first she saw the light of day, was a great disappointment. She was a girl—she ought to have been a boy.

Why ought she to have been a boy? To fight Scotland on one side and Ireland on the other—France and Spain over the water. Why ever all these countries were the enemies of England, it would take me too long to tell. But you must remember, please, that they were—four strong enemies, Ireland, Scotland, France and Spain.

We are every one of us made up of a great many different people. Elizabeth was made up of her grandfather, who was cautious and prudent, of her father, who was impetuous and charming, of her mother, who was vain, had a high temper, and never cared what she did, so that she got her own way. The impetuous and charming father very soon grew tired of the vain, light-minded mother, and cut off her head. If four step-mothers can make up for one real mother, then the baby Elizabeth was not to be pitied; but can they? At first she was so badly off that she had not even clothes enough to wear. In later life she more than made up for this deficiency, for she wore a new dress

[1] A lecture given to some working-girls.

every day, 365 dresses in a year. She liked to be painted as a goddess. When she appeared as a 'mere woman' it was in a dress all over eyes and ears to show that she could see and hear everywhere—which, after all, was not quite like a mere woman. There were always two opinions about her. People who admired her called her Gloriana, Oriana, The Virgin Queen, The Maiden Queen, Great Elizabeth, and Good Queen Bess. People who did not admire her called her a serpent and a viper.

At the time when she was young, it was quite a new idea that little girls ought to be taught as well as little boys, and her impetuous and charming father was very full of it. So she learnt many things, useful and ornamental too. She was only six when she gave her little brother, Edward, a cambric shirt that she had made herself. She learnt to write a most beautiful hand. When we see her faded old yellow letters now, we wish that we could write like that. She could talk to learned men in Latin and Greek, to Frenchmen in French, to Italians in Italian. Our dear old Queen Victoria liked to stop an organ-grinder, if she met one when she was out driving, to show that she could talk to him in Italian: and Queen Elizabeth—it is one of the few points that they have in common—was very fond of showing off this accomplishment. Strange: but we have all of us these little vanities. She was but eleven years old when she wrote a letter in Italian to the last of the four stepmothers. She was taught to dance most wonderfully too—she went on dancing when she was over seventy—and she could play and sing. There were no pianos then. Her favourite instrument was called, appropriately, the virginals.

After the very disagreeable experience of having too few clothes when she was a baby, Elizabeth, as a girl of twenty, underwent the still more disagreeable experience of having too little liberty—of being shut up in prison. Her brother was dead. Her half-sister, Mary, who was queen now, was afraid that she wished to be queen. No doubt she did, but she was much too clever to say so. When next you go to the Tower of London, please ask the warder to show you Traitor's Gate. Through this gate every one who was thought to be a traitor to the queen had to pass—and to pass through that gate was very often the first chapter of a story that ended with somebody's head rolling away from somebody's body on to a scaffold. 'I am no traitor!' Elizabeth said proudly, when she was carried thither one wet Palm Sunday. One of the lords in attendance offered his cloak to keep her from the rain, but she put it back 'with a good dash,' and setting her feet on the first step of the stair, she said, 'Here landeth as true a subject, being prisoner, as ever landed at these stairs, and before Thee, O God, I speak it, having none other friend but Thee alone.' Afterwards she was in prison in the country, at Woodstock, instead of being in prison in London. Her gaoler, a gentleman named Bedingfield, was very strict; when she was going to be removed somewhere else, she took a diamond for a pen, and amused herself with scratching on a window-pane a little imaginary talk between them. Bedingfield speaks the first line:

> 'Much suspected by me:
> Nothing proved can be,
> Quoth Elizabeth, prisoner.'

When she became queen, she told Bedingfield that, if

she ever wanted any one safely kept in prison, she should give that person to him. Was he pleased, do you think, or was he not? A double-edged compliment like that was very much in her line. Even her enemies—even the people who called her a serpent and a viper—confessed that she had 'a spirit full of incantation,' by which, I suppose they meant that she charmed them somehow, even while they detested her. At that time she was 'pleasing rather than beautiful,' tall and well-proportioned, her complexion somewhat olive; in her portraits she is always dazzlingly fair, but then she would not allow any shadows to be painted on her face, and as a child she is said to have smashed all the looking-glasses she could find because they did not make her pretty enough. She had beautiful eyes, full of spirit and sparkle, 'and above all a beautiful hand,' which she liked to show. Her curly hair was of a light auburn, and her nose was like the beak of an eagle. Far away, in a great old library at Durham, hangs a picture of her half-sister Mary, and I have heard it said that any one who happens to be sitting in the room while parties of visitors are being shown through, may hear very different opinions expressed about this likeness. 'Ah, poor suffering, deeply religious lady! Looks like a perfect saint,' says one man. 'O the horrid, cruel bigot! Looks like a hateful fiend!' says another. So I do not know whether you would have thought Elizabeth beautiful or not. It would have depended on your opinion of what she did, I think, for 'handsome is that handsome does.' If you had been a child you might have liked her, she was always kind to children.

When her enemies tried to puzzle her with questions, to bewilder her, to prove that she held wrong views about

the Supper of the Lord, she wrote one verse which is worth all the rest of her poetry put together.

> Christ was the Word and spake it.
> He took the Bread, and brake it.
> And what the Word doth make it,
> That I believe, and take it.

Elizabeth was staying at Hatfield (where Lord Salisbury, who is of the same family as her great minister, Cecil, Lord Burghley, now lives), when the news arrived that her sister, Mary, was dead—that she was queen. Did she show how happy she was? Did she come flying up to London? Not a bit of it! She was much too clever. She sent a messenger to find out whether it was true. But before that messenger could get back again—and we may be sure that he rode as fast as his horse's legs could carry him—the lords of the council had found their way to Hatfield and greeted this young lady of twenty-three as their sovereign mistress. She fell upon her knees. 'This is the Lord's doing,' she said, 'and it is marvellous in our eyes.'

From the first she showed clearly enough that she meant to rule by the love of her people. She often appeared amongst them, she travelled hither and thither, and visited this town and that, she smiled with pleasure when they cheered, she encouraged them to come in crowds about her, she made them beautiful speeches. She led them to feel that she cared for their approval. If they disapproved strongly of anything she did, she altered her conduct. Only on one point did she hold her own. They were excessively anxious that she should marry. And she was excessively anxious that she should not.

Her brother-in-law, Philip of Spain, proposed to

marry her. It would be quite easy, he said. She would only have to ask the Pope to forgive her for not having been a Roman Catholic before. She took a month to think about it—decided that it was not so easy after all—and said, No thank you.

Afterwards, at different times, there were hovering about the throne an Archduke of Austria, a Prince of Sweden, two of the sons of the King of France, one of whom she called 'her little French frog' (she used to wear a brooch made like a frog that he had given her), a Scottish Earl, a great English nobleman, Lord Leicester, who had an unenviable reputation for poisoning people he was tired of, and built the loveliest Almshouses in the world, which are still to be seen with dear old men in them at Warwick. She liked their admiration, and all the beautiful presents they gave her. She would not say Yes and she would not say No. She was just like the White Owl in the Fairy Story. 'What shall I do? I have promised to marry them all.'

'Here is a great resort of wooers and controversy among lovers,' wrote Lord Burghley. 'Would to God the Queen had one, and the rest honourably satisfied.'

The Spanish Ambassador, as was natural, expressed himself still more strongly: 'This woman is possessed with a hundred thousand devils, and yet she pretends to me that she would like to be a nun, and live in a cell, and tell her beads from morning to night.'

'I have had such a torment with the Queen's majesty as an ague hath not in five fits abated me,' says poor Lord Burghley again. And we can fancy how bad it must have been when the Queen's majesty condescended to inform him, 'I will have here but one mistress, and no master.'

I am sorry to say that when people are very vain, they often grow very jealous too. Elizabeth was extremely anxious to believe what all her lovers told her—that she was the most beautiful princess in the world; but she found it difficult, because there was another very beautiful Queen close by, Mary Stuart, Queen of Scotland, and all her courtiers said that *she* was the most beautiful princess in the world. One day she asked the ambassador from Scotland, 'Which is the most beautiful, the Queen of Scotland or myself?' That is the kind of question that never should be asked, even by Queens. The poor ambassador was very much put to it. At last he found a safe answer. 'My mistress is the most beautiful lady in Scotland,' said he, 'and your majesty is the most beautiful lady in England.' But Gloriana was not going to let him off like this. 'Which is the tallest?' she inquired. There the ambassador felt quite happy, for Mary of Scotland was the tallest. 'Then,' said Queen Elizabeth, 'she is too tall, for I myself am neither too tall nor too short. And can Queen Mary play on the virginals? Does she play well?' 'O yes,' the ambassador said, 'she plays pretty well for a Queen.' After dinner, Elizabeth arranged that he should be brought in, by chance as it were, just as she was playing herself, and playing very well indeed. She let him listen for a few minutes, and then she jumped up, very much surprised, pretended to strike him with her hand, and said she was not accustomed to play before men, she only did it when she was alone, so that she might not feel too sad. But—since he had contrived to hear them both—did Mary play better than she did, or did she play better than Mary? The ambassador was obliged to say that she played the best, but by this time he had had enough

of comparisons, which might be rejected in Scotland, and he asked leave to go back. Elizabeth insisted on keeping him two days longer, however, that she might show off her dancing. She could not miss such a chance of finding out whether she or the Queen of Scotland would be looked upon as the best partner at a ball. The ambassador answered that Mary of Scotland 'danced not so high nor so disposedly as she did.' And what that means, goodness only knows. 'Oh, how I wish I could see her!' Elizabeth said; 'quietly you know, without any fuss.' 'Why not?' rejoined the ambassador. 'Why should not your majesty disguise yourself as a page, and come back to Scotland with me?' Whereupon Elizabeth heaved a sigh, and said, oh! if she only could.

The Queen of Scotland was not so particular about marrying as Queen Elizabeth. She married three times —each time more unhappily than the last—quarrelled with her great nobles—fled into England. She was bound to be Queen of England, if Elizabeth died, and many a great English nobleman, the Duke of Norfolk among the rest, aspired to be her fourth husband. But they were all afraid to mention the subject before Elizabeth; and Norfolk, at the bare idea of it, 'fell into an ague, and was fain to get him to bed without his dinner.' Remarkable how many people got the ague when they had anything to say to the Queen!

This Duke of Norfolk, finding that he dared not woo openly, made a plot to marry Queen Mary. Off went his head!

There is no doubt that, even in prison, where Elizabeth took good care to keep her, she was extremely dangerous, especially when the Pope excommunicated Queen Elizabeth, which made it lawful for any Roman Catholic to

murder her. There were plots everywhere—plots among her own servants. Those who loved her—those who saw that Protestant England was growing and thriving under her wise rule—those who dreaded the most terrible confusion if she died—urged her to put Mary Stuart to death. 'I cannot put to death the bird that has flown to me for succour from the hawk,' she said. She kept the bird in a cage—in several different cages—for nineteen years. One man after another tried to get her out. One man after another failed. One head after another rolled on the scaffold.

Meanwhile, in France, the Massacre of St. Bartholomew took place, and nearly all the French Protestants were murdered. Queen Elizabeth put on mourning when she received the French Ambassador, and all the court were robed in black. It was, Lord Burghley told him, the most dreadful deed that had been done since the Crucifixion. The Protestants of England became still more alarmed about the life of their Queen, and an association was formed to protect her. At last the Queen's council urged upon her, that she *must* put Mary to death. There could be no safety, either for her or for England, while that beautiful bird lived.

'The life of Mary is the death of Elizabeth—the death of Mary is the life of Elizabeth.'

Elizabeth hesitated—shifted her ground—said she would—said she would not—hoped Mary would die of herself—wished some one would murder her without being asked to do so. Elizabeth was like a certain king in Shakespeare who 'would not play false, and yet would wrongly win.' But we cannot get rid of our perplexities in this way. Mary Stuart went on being perfectly well, and nobody tried to kill her. On the contrary, they

tried to kill Elizabeth. At last her mind was made up. Even then she tried to lay all the blame on others. She could not endure to think that her people would call her what she really was—unjust and cruel. Nothing can ever make a wrong deed right. She had no business to take the life of the bird that had fled to her for succour.

Mary of Scotland had heard a sound of hammers in the hall of the Castle of Fotheringay, where she was imprisoned, and as she heard it, the picture of a scaffold rising crossed her mind—but she could not believe it. 'Day had followed day, and she heard no more.' 'The blow, when it came at last, therefore came suddenly.' Lord Shrewsbury and the Earl of Kent brought her the news.

Philip of Spain, the brother-in-law who had proposed to marry Elizabeth, made up his mind, now that Mary Queen of Scots was dead, and her son a Protestant, to conquer England for himself. Never mind, said Queen Elizabeth's sailors, 'Twelve of her Majesty's ships are a match for all the galleys in the King of Spain's dominions.' Then was there a rush and stir throughout the realm of England. Then was there racing and chasing everywhere. Then were the beacon-fires lighted upon a hundred hills. The Armada is coming! The Armada is coming! And from the whole of England there rose a mighty shout of *No!*

It was Lord Howard of Effingham who commanded our fleet against the Duke of Medina Sidonia, the Commander of Spain. The winds and the waves fought upon our side—and Drake, the glorious sailor who had sailed round the world in three years in the Golden Hind, and sunk the great big ships of Spain, and

brought back to the Queen £75,090 and the jewels that she wore in her crown at a state banquet after Philip had complained of his behaviour. She said the Golden Hind was to be kept for ever in memory of him, and she gave him a little golden ship that is still an heirloom in the Drake family. The ladies of Spain were so much afraid of Drake that one of them said she dared not go in a boat with the King himself upon the water, lest Drake should capture her. They said he had a magic mirror in which he could see always whatever the King of Spain did. He carried indeed the magic mirror of imagination, which enables people to see many things. In among the great big heavy lumbering vessels he sent a few old ships (no crews at all) that he had set on fire —and the great big heavy lumbering vessels blazed up, and sank.

'He blew with His breath, and they were scattered.' So ran the inscription upon the medal struck for the Armada, giving the glory to God alone. It was indeed a mighty deliverance.

Great things Queen Elizabeth did—great things she left undone. The Dutchmen, who rebelled against her brother-in-law, Philip, invited her to be their Queen. If she had accepted the invitation, it is probable that the Boer War would never have been fought. But she was very prudent. She was an excellent housekeeper. She did not think that she had money enough to fight the battles of Holland as well as those of England, and she declined the proposal. All the people of England, she said, were her husbands—perhaps she did not care to have thousands of Dutch husbands as well. She sent the Earl of Leicester to take care of them; but the only result of that was that England lost the bravest and

best of all her knights, Sir Philip Sidney, the one man who dared to speak the truth to her without getting an ague. She became more and more of a tyrant. Even Sir Walter Raleigh, the gallant who first attracted her attention by spoiling a beautiful new cloak that she might not have muddy shoes—the brave discoverer who discovered potatoes, and tobacco, and a new province in America, which he called Virginia in honour of the Virgin Queen—even Sir Walter Raleigh was very much afraid.

'Fain would I climb, but that I fear to fall,' he wrote one day—as usual upon a window—as usual, I suppose, with the point of a diamond. There were so many diamonds about the world just then. And the queen took another, and underneath 'Fain would I climb, but that I fear to fall,' she wrote: 'If your heart fail you, do not climb at all.' Needless to say that Raleigh did climb—but he fell, whether his heart failed him or no. His friend Spenser sang of Elizabeth as the Fairy Queen. When Spenser died, and was buried in Westminster Abbey, it is said that all the other poets went to the funeral and dropped their pens into his grave. There lies, for all we know, the pen of Shakespeare. Shakespeare lived longer than Queen Elizabeth. He paid her a magnificent compliment in the *Midsummer Night's Dream*, when he said that the God of Love had no power to wound her, for, however hard he might try, 'still the imperial votaress passed on, in maiden meditation, fancy-free.'

But as the years went on he saw the imperial votaress, the Fairy Queen, grow very old and wrinkled, very capricious and cruel, and when she died he did not pretend to mourn for her.

For the last years were not the best. After the years of plenty came the years of famine. She did not like to think she was growing old—we none of us do. When the Bishop of St. David's preached before her on the text, 'Lord, teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom,' she did not thank him as was her usual custom when the sermon was over. No, no! 'You might have kept your arithmetic for yourself,' said she; 'but I see that the greatest clerks are not the wisest men.'

Lord Burghley died; and it was long before she could mention his name without tears. She seems to have cried very easily, by the way, judging from the large number of persons who enjoyed the privilege of seeing her weep. When she was really in deep distress, she did not cry, I think, she sighed. A kinsman of hers, Robert Carey, says that he heard her sigh a few days before her own death, 'forty or fifty great sighs,' just as she sighed after the death of the Queen of Scots. Burghley was dead, but still she had his son—the son whom she had made Sir Robert Cecil—to help her.

Leicester was dead, and a new favourite reigned, the Earl of Essex, but he was very disobedient, and though, after his fits of naughtiness, he said he was like Nebuchadnezzar, content to eat grass like an ox and be wet with the dew of heaven, till it should please her Majesty to restore him to his understanding, she could not make him thoroughly subservient. She did not want him to eat grass like an ox, she wanted him to do what she told him to do, and as he would not—off went his head! The people here in London loved him. He had tried to win them to come with him to the Queen, but when the moment arrived, they all got the ague.

Nevertheless they could not forgive the Queen for cutting off his head. She began to lose the thing that she cared for most of all—the love of her people. Once more she made them a magnificent speech.

'It was Elizabeth's last great triumph.' The world was passing away from her. They tried to flatter and to amuse her as of old. 'When thou dost feel creeping time at thy gate,' she said to her godson, who had been writing verses for her, 'these fooleries will please thee less.' It was then that Robert Carey found her sitting on cushions on the floor sighing heavily. What was she thinking of? Not of Hatfield, not of Tilbury, not of the glorious days at Kenilworth when Leicester feasted her, not even of Essex and his rebellion and his doom. Before her eyes there stood that awful scaffold at Fotheringay—the woman, the sister Queen, the bird which had fled to her for succour and died. 'Then, upon my knowledge, she shed many tears and sighs, manifesting her innocence that she never gave consent to the death of that Queen.' In vain did Carey try to comfort her. Next day was Sunday, and she had ordered a room to be prepared for her to go to chapel. Long the courtiers waited; she did not come. At last one of the grooms of her chamber came out. She was not able to go so far as to the great room. She would have service in the private room close by. There cushions were laid for her.

Four days and nights she lay upon her cushions, neither eating nor sleeping, suffering from restlessness and thirst. She was weary of life, and yet she shrank from death. The Lord Admiral Howard, the person who had most influence, was sent for. He came and knelt beside her, kissing her hands, imploring her with

tears to take some food. After a long while she let him give her a little broth; and then, encouraged by success, he ventured to urge upon her that she should go to bed.

'If you saw such things in your bed,' she said, 'as I see when I am in mine, you would not persuade me.'

At last Cecil appealed to her in the name of her people. 'To content the people,' he said, 'your Majesty must go to bed.' At this all her old spirit returned. 'The word *must* is not used to princes,' said she. 'Little man, little man, if your father had lived, you durst not have said so much, but you know I must die and that makes you presumptuous.' Cecil was bidden to go—and all the rest, except Howard. 'My lord, I am tied with a chain of iron about my neck,' she murmured. Worse and worse she grew—more and more silent, speaking only twice or thrice in the twenty-four hours—at last, for one long day and night, remaining utterly silent, her finger in her mouth, her 'rayless eyes' open. Her ladies could hardly stand the strain.

The Archbishop and her chaplains came to her. He told her that she ought to hope much in the mercy of God. Her piety—her zeal—the admirable work that she had done—and so on and so on. 'My lord,' she said, 'the crown, which I have borne so long, has given enough vanity in my time. I beseech you not to increase it in this hour, when I am so near my death.' Long and late he remained, praying by her side. At last he left her; she sank into a deep sleep from which she never awakened. 'A few hours later Robert Carey was riding hard along the North Road,' to be the first to tell the son of Mary Stuart that he was king.

It was a strange thing to stand in Westminster Abbey

between the grave of Mary Stuart and the grave in which Elizabeth was laid by the side of her own half-sister, Mary. If she had never lived—had never reigned—London would not have been what it is to-day, and every one of us here in this room to-night would have been different. Every church, every chapel, would have borne a different character. The river would not have been crowded, as it is to-day, with those great ships that are the road to another England across the seas. The shops would not have been as they are now—nor the city. Up to Elizabeth's time business was carried on in the open street, or—a curious place for it—in the nave of St. Paul's Cathedral. In her time Sir Thomas Gresham built the Royal Exchange, and asked her to come and open it. Londoners, as a rule, are not fond of new inventions, and he could not feel sure whether he would be successful in letting the new shops that he had built all round. So he went, cunning man (he was the sort of man that Elizabeth could understand), to the leading shopkeepers and told them that, if they would be so kind as to come, and put out their wares in the windows, and light a few candles in honour of Her Majesty's condescension in appearing there, to make everything look prosperous and bright and pretty, he would let them have the shops rent-free for a year. Of course they came—of course they lighted the candles, of course they availed themselves of the kind permission to stay a year rent-free, of course at the end of the year they did not want to leave, they took the shops on—and you know—or perhaps you do not know—what land is worth now in the city. If Queen Elizabeth had never lived and reigned, we should not have had an excellent Poor Law. Whenever we go against it, poverty grows more, whenever we observe it,

poverty grows less. If Queen Elizabeth had never lived and reigned, Shakespeare would never have written as he did, and you would not have been going to see—as I hope you do sometimes go to see—*A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Macbeth*, *Henry V.*, and many another wondrous play. If Queen Elizabeth had never lived and reigned, Sir Walter Scott would not have written *Kenilworth*, a novel that you have all read, I am sure, or one that you all mean to read some day—a finer novel than any one alive could write now. Would that we had kept the Great Eliza's love of music, and the love of it in the England of her day! In every little barber's shop there hung two instruments upon the wall, so that one customer and another might amuse himself singing and playing while the other was shaved or had his hair cut. I am afraid she and her people would not have thought much of music-halls and musical comedy; they liked better music than that, and prettier words too.

'So passes away the glory of the world!' As a dream —as a shadow—as the tinkling sound of the thin and delicate old music of Queen Elizabeth's day. 'Death lays his icy hand on kings.' They are gone, but none of the merciful forgetfulness that will shroud your name and mine is permitted to throw a veil over the ill that they have done. Terrible are their responsibilities. If they have failed and fallen, what are we that we should judge? We cannot but shudder at the cruelty of Elizabeth—we cannot but disdain her monstrous vanity. When we have done shuddering at her and despising her, let us remember that it was she who made England what it is —and she who set the great example of love towards her native land—and she who fired the hearts of men to fight for justice.

THE WILL TO DIE[1]

'A MAN would die,' said Bacon, 'though he were neither valiant nor miserable, onely upon a wearinesse to doe the same thing so oft over and over.'

Therein he betrayed the *ennui* that is, at times, the portion of the wise, evening himself with the world-weary sage of 'The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be.' Perhaps also there spoke in him the venturesome restlessness of the age of Elizabeth, when no man could be content without a new kingdom to conquer, and to sit still was not to live at all. In every age men of other ages abound; and the attitude of mind is by no means inconceivable now.

The people who want to die—and there are many—do not, as a rule, want to die because they are intolerably tired of doing over and over again the two or three things which are necessary to human existence. They want to die because their friends have died, or because they cannot endure the responsibility of their actions, or because they are out of health.

. . . . . .

One of the most profound interpreters of the time, Henrik Ibsen, inculcates firmly the love of darkness. It is light, says he, that makes men discontented. Darkness is natural to him as water to a fish; if he could but

[1] Fragments from an Essay called by this name. Date unknown.

remain in his own element, he would be better off. A natural reaction, after the thirst for light that led to the discoveries of science in recent years! 'Dark with excess of bright,' mortal eyes turn away gladly to night, mystery, death. The end of too much knowledge, too easily acquired, is, as it always has been, satiety and shamed self-consciousness. O for a black veil to hide us from ourselves, and from each other! 'Welcome, Sister Death!' And yet is she welcome? No; for some, though they dread neither agony nor extinction, fear—that worst fearing of all—they do not know what.

. . . We are constrained to admit that Bacon must be overwhelmingly in the right when he says that there is no passion so weak but it will conquer the fear of death. Curiosity, so doctors tell us, conquers it in almost every case with which they deal. Now this is a good, robust passion, accountable for many crimes and for much heroic behaviour; but the instance given by Bacon is curious. Many Romans, it appears, after the Emperor Otho had taken his own life, killed themselves out of *pity*—a passion which, with characteristic phlegm, he calls the weakest of all. Surely this was but a local, temporary scorn of Man's enemy. At Rome the Almighty had not fixed His canon 'gainst self-slaughter; it was held honourable there. Compassion for Otho would not, maybe, have led his adherents to go so far, if they had not hoped that they might win fame, a hope which is at all times powerful with the human race, seeing that it is rooted in one of our deepest foundations —vanity. The indignant contempt of Queen Victoria, had any one proposed to honour her demise after this fashion, may be imagined; yet she was far more widely and deeply loved than Otho could have been. There was

a debate upon the subject among the native adorers of Nicholson, when he fell at Delhi. Four of them elected to die because he had died; they wished to serve him in the under world. A fifth, with wise comprehension of the man, asserted that this would make him angry—that it would be a more acceptable tribute to Nicholson if they worshipped Nicholson's God. And he went to seek Christian instruction.

. . . . . .

That rapture in the contemplation of Death which is found so often in the young, and in those persons dowered with eternal youth who are the first to embrace new forms of religion, depends in great measure on the state of the blood. Reason has little to do with it. We are not martyrs because we are convinced. 'I do not believe in God. I know Him.'

Grand as the death of a man 'drunken with God' must be, we are more moved as we grow older by the quiet jests and courtesies of the balanced mind that refuses to make either a fast or a feast of the occasion. 'Pity that should be cut that hath never committed treason,' said Sir Thomas More to his beard as he put it out of the way of the executioner; and the little Socratic joke in tune with the whole life of a leading scholar of the Renaissance, gives us rarer delight than the high ecstasy of that Marian martyr on the other side who went dancing into the flames.

. . . . . .

After all, Romans and Greeks are not so distant. Their opinions were often like our own—strong, but by no means clear. Our politicians, our more liberal Churchmen, would converse with Plato or with Cicero on terms of easier mutual understanding than with the Ninth

Louis. Our women would sympathise with Alcestis more readily than with St. Elizabeth. In the Middle Ages the feminine element overpowered every other. The position of women became wholly unnatural. The noblest men turned themselves into women, like Francis of Assisi. The noblest women became nuns.

. . . . . .

There are among poets of the younger school some who conceive of death as a condition of gray, weary, dream-like exile, neither wholly material nor yet free from the bonds of matter—a condition in which ghosts are more familiar than souls, good or bad.

Milton, who believed that a spirit was something more solid than a man, would not have understood this. Nor would Dante, who held that the spirit *is* the man, and the bodily form a mere accident. They lived in periods differing greatly one from the other, yet alike in a certain Puritanical severity that compassed life round with restrictions. They indemnified themselves with the glorious liberty of the sons of God in the life to come.

Hezekiah had not the slightest doubt that death was a great evil, and many a Christian who says of his departed friend 'Poor So-and-So!' echoes the feeling of Hezekiah. A natural instinct overbears his logic.

COLLECTION OF PASSAGES FROM LETTERS AND DIARIES

COLLECTION OF PASSAGES FROM LETTERS AND DIARIES

I.—From 1882 to 1897

1882.

'Whom the gods love die young' and whom they hate die old, but whom they honour, these they take up to their eternal habitations in the ripe summer time of existence.

1883.

To-morrow—double Janus-headed to-morrow—blessing and curse of frail humanity. But for thee, the pleasure of to-day would be Heaven, but for thee, to-day's load of misery could not be borne, but for thee, we should be immortal, and but for thee, I should make my will this instant. What art thou? Nothing—here in Time, where all is to-day. Everything in that eternity which is but a succession of To-morrows.

1883.

In the midst of much trouble, much doubt, much fear, many failings, I feel a steady gladness in the thought that I am drawing nearer to that end which must be

great, to that beginning which must be as a flood of light after darkness.

Goethe conquers one's admiration, willing or unwilling, step by step, and leads one down, down into what seem to be depths of thinking, till suddenly the stars begin to shine; but with Schiller it is morning, and people are still young, and death is only what it is to the young, a glory and a hope. All his tragedies together are joyous, compared to the gay bits of *Wilhelm Meister*.

1884.

To-night men save the lost and preach for life the Gospel of Destruction. To-night men sit at ease and drink away their very souls to Satan. To-night men's hearts are broken, and men's fortunes are made. To-night men pause upon the verge of crime unspeakable and climb to the triumphant height of heroes. To-night men die and are born. To-night also the stars are shining and the winds at peace.

1886.

They err who say that without love is no joy. There is a joy of the intellect with which the heart has nothing to do. It is like a little ray of candle-light by which darkness becomes visible. But the joy of love is sunshine.

It was delightful to hear of your looking out at the

stars for sympathy when you felt low, and getting better directly; they have so often comforted me. They are the blessedest, most soothing influences. Theirs is the only brightness that never jars. How odd, to think that a lot of great big blundering worlds, first-cousins to our own, should have that power to quiet one.

1887.

Surely Shelley wasn't quite such a wretch as you think him? It seems to me that Godwin evilangelized him so very successfully that one can only pity him, not condemn him for many of his misdeeds; they were errors of judgment rather than sins. Of course that cannot be said of all. He was terribly wrong,—yet, do you know, sins and all, he never repels me for a moment, as does a man like Carlyle, for instance, whose life is moral, but whose character is utterly immoral, being grounded in selfishness and intolerance; or like Wordsworth, who was false to the ideal of his youth for want of faith. Mary is a dreadful bore with her eternal 'Read Greek' and her journal. She reminds me oddly of Sarah Coleridge, in whose letters I can see no charm whatever. They are both so Englishwomanly. They certainly have imagination, and when they set it to work it works successfully. I love Phantasmion, I dare say I should love Frankenstein. But it does not play about in their ordinary writings or lend any grace to their lives. It is all cold.

1888.

'*Dove sono i bei momenti?*' Sometimes we lose the

Present Tense of life altogether. For Anodos this morning is last night. Last night he was up in the Gallery at Covent Garden, happy as a god, listening to *Figaro*, and tho' he has been to bed in the interval, there he still is, and there he is likely to remain. *Figaro* gives him the same kind of pleasure as *The Merchant* or *As You Like It.* Perfect comedy is almost too beautiful to laugh at, as perfect tragedy is 'too deep for tears.' Much of it is a joy of pure sensation, like riding or swimming, for those who have not been trained to understand music, but there are things which inspire a feeling beyond all definition. Poetically it reminds me of Chaucer, it is so simple, youthful and vigorous.

April is the month of lovers' quarrels between the Earth and the Sky, and an engagement is nothing without them. May is the month for Confirmations. The soft pink-and-white girlish faces under their floating veils look like a cloud of May blossoms, and not inaptly might those youthful vows be called 'The Promise of May.' Marriage is for hot June, and Death for cold December.

'June may be had by the poorest comer.' It is God's alms to the poor. He feeds them with the sweet air, He clothes their naked bodies with the warmth of the sunshine. I never feel inclined to be charitable in June. It seems to me that Heaven has taken it off my hands, and I am sorry for no one. Old women who sit all day long at street corners move me not. Vagrant families

provoke only a smile. Little boys without any boots make me feel rather envious. Anybody who is well enough to be out anywhere deserves not pity.

Talk of myriad-minded Shakespeare. Why, the commonest man breathing has many, many more than a myriad minds. I am a different person every twelve hours. I go to bed as feminine as Ophelia, fiery, enthusiastic, ready to go to the stake for some righteous cause. I get up the very next morning, almost as masculine as Falstaff, grumbling at Family Prayers. Is it possible for me to believe that I am really the hero of the night before? Personal identity? People are fools that doubt it? Upon my word, I think we are much greater fools to believe in it. It is only the stupid transitory flesh in which we walk about that makes us. We believe it for others, not for ourselves.

Anodos has over and over again been conscious, both for good and evil, that he was being rented by a spirit not his own, and when his body goes to sleep, he is in all probability animating another one at the Antipodes. Of course he cannot be found out in this Box and Cox arrangement; he cannot even find out himself. . . . Nature is ever economical, and souls are her very dearest commodity. It probably takes her as long to manufacture even a baby's soul, as it does to turn out ten elephants.

June 1888.

If Anodos had a boy (which, thank kind heaven! he

has not), he should go to Eton. Windsor Castle teaches a better kind of royalty than can be learnt in courts, and to love a river is to love poetry in one of its most visible forms.

3rd June 1888.

Anodos had in his early youth a great liking for sermons. Not that he ever understood or remembered them, but the taste of them was sweet to his palate. It is not so now. He left Church this morning especially to avoid one. Outside the birds held Morningsong, and the wind that bloweth where it listeth preached out of St. John's Gospel, 'Thou canst not tell whence it cometh.' It might have been crisping the waves, ruffling the heather, scattering the powdery snow upon some distant Alp, before it folded its great wings, and fluttered peacefully down into that London Churchyard. . . . . I incline to think that it is not three people who make a congregation, but one. Alone, I am a host in myself; oppressed on every side by masses of yawning fellow-Christians, how can I be devout? (I am not.) Even if they are not yawning, what is the feverish excitement of a crowd hanging on the rhetoric of the local Vicar to the quiet Apocalypse of a solitary person under the sky among trees? 'The heavens declare the glory of God: and the firmament showeth His handiwork.' After all, even a Cathedral declares the glory of Man.

July 1*st*, 1888.

To worship God in silence is noble; it shows the

poverty and unworthiness of speech, by exalting thought above it. In the finest silence of all, 'Thought is not; in enjoyment it expires,' and the worship of joy is the worship of angels. But to worship God with impromptu words is ignoble, for unconsidered speech is the least that a man can offer.

July 2nd, 1888.

Roman remains depress me. It seems so impossible to reconstruct people out of them. If there is nothing tangible left of us but sixpences and shillings, and fonts, and kitchen saucepans, and sanitary arrangements, how will the New Zealander that sits on the ruins of St. Paul's ever know what we were like? A Roman hairpin is something. It helps one just a little towards a lady.

July 21st, 1888.

Solitude affects some people like wine. They must not take too much of it. It flies to the head, and they become intoxicated. Too much society is far better for a man than too little. Abstractions become real, realities abstract, to an over-contemplative person. Odd that it was Peter, the least, not John the most contemplative of the three chosen Disciples, who cried out to stay for ever upon the Mount of Transfiguration, because it was good for him to be there. But many an active-minded man since has over-estimated the glory of contemplative hero worship, and lived to rue the day when he built a tabernacle on a mountain for some ideal master of his, and refused to come down. The true masters are not they that will live in such tabernacles.

July 23rd, 1888.

I suppose the most undramatic people in the world have a tendency to act somewhere, somehow. You cannot divide the world into actors and non-actors. 'Tis *every* man that 's a player. Only they play to different audiences, some to other men, some to women, some to themselves, some to God. Gordon was always finding himself out at it, and hissing the performer. It is this which gives his *Journal* and his letters their unique character. He knew, and he forced himself to say that he knew, he would rather have so many soldiers at his command than trust God to look after him. Most men are unconscious actors. This rare man knew when the mask stiffened over the natural face. We are so well accustomed to the acting, that when some sudden event interrupts it, and people are themselves for a minute or two, we always say they are in an unnatural state. Lovers, being absorbed in each other, sometimes forget to act for weeks together. Civilised humanity found it impossible to stand this, and invented the honeymoon.

Aug. 30th, 1888.

No moon, but multitudes of stars. E—— and I, walking along the cliff, lay down on our backs to look at them. What strange things people are pitied for! I can imagine nothing more divine than drowning on a night like that. It is the sort of death a god would choose, if he could die. Not so our God in the midnight noon of Calvary. E—— talked about the motherliness of the sea. 'Yes,' I said, 'it 's a comfort to think that to her the oldest of us are babies.' But I was much too happy

for anything of that kind. 'Thought was not, in enjoyment it expired.' Those monumental stars, homes of poets for ever. The eyes of David, Plato, Shakespeare, rested where ours rest now. They shone through the three kingdoms of the dead for Dante. Goethe looked at them, writing his *Faust*. There was music afterwards —'Glory to God in the Highest.'

Oct. 31*st*, 1888.

Why are a man's words bound to be true, when half his deeds at least are sure to be false?

Nov. 3*rd*, 1888.

There is delightful freemasonry in a fog. Ignorant people will always help each other. Half knowledge is very communicable; not so knowledge.

Dec. 13*th*, 1888.

We give more truth to those we hate than to those we love. To the latter we are our souls only, the part and not the whole, or some entirely fictitious person, invented for their benefit, a person who always likes what they like and never gets tired.

Sept. 4*th*, 1889.

It seems to me nothing should be done, when you are not in the mood for it, except Duty. 'Love me, or leave me alone.' People who are always in the mood for Duty make Saints, and people who are often in the mood

for it, Heroes. They live *con amore*; the rest of us only *par condescendance*—which is not the way to get on. Their own life keeps them warm. They are not so dependent as the rest of us upon some other. Perhaps they have never felt the imperious longing for an echo, however faint, so only it were true, of their own existence, that makes some people lonely. Millions of people dead, not one the same, millions alive now, not one with so much as an eye the same as mine, millions to come, all different.

Nov. 28th, 1889.

How far away we are from each other. Two walls of flesh between me and the nearest person on earth! Even the eyes mysterious. I look, and see two little pictures of my outward self, when all I long for is the image of the other soul at those windows; and then, we may reduce our bodies to the same pace, sit, walk, run evenly together, but how seldom will the mind run in couples! My neighbour's mind has wings, and reaches the goal before I have so much as seen it, or mine is half-way to another goal by mistake, while my neighbour is labouring to explain where it is that he wants to go to.

June 2nd, 1890.

How many a born king spends his whole life in the pursuit of asses for want of some kind prophet to tell him he is a head and shoulders taller than other people!

I have been reading Hazlitt with even keener pleasure

than I meant to get out of him. It seems to me the critics of those days were flesh and blood compared to the airy-fairy creatures that carry on the trade now. They had much more solid beef and mutton books to fall back upon. The background of their minds was Shakespeare and Spenser, not Shelley and Keats, and somehow one feels the difference in the downright cut-and-thrust manliness of their style. It 's not so dainty of course, but I can't help thinking it will yet manage to outlive Mat Arnold and Andrew Lang. They certainly didn't fight as one that beateth the air.

Ibsen's delicate way of unfolding character seems to me wonderful, and a man that thoroughly understands a woman was a very great man indeed. There are two or three people who can tell stories about her, and one or two who can put her into a book without killing her during the process, but how few can get her alive on to the stage not laughing only, not crying only, but doing both, and that not hundreds of years ago in blank verse, but dressed in the latest fashion, and talking prose.

March 15th, 1891.

Ghosts, *The Light that Failed*, and a sermon fifty-six minutes long, all in the course of one week, would be too much for the patience of a female Job. I am perfectly worn out with realism and the want of it. I wish it were rather less the fashion in literature and rather more the fashion in church. Anent *Ghosts*, I don't know what to say. I always begin by respecting any one or anything that knocks me down, so on Friday night I was sure it must

'make for righteousness.' On Saturday morn, when I had got over the dizziness, but was still aching mentally all over from the pain of it, I didn't feel quite so sure, and by Saturday eve I felt nearly sure that it made for the very reverse. . . .

A dull, stunned sensation still clings to me. The fruit of the modern Tree of Knowledge is certainly very nasty; it may 'make one wise,' but it is not 'a thing to be desired.' E—— says *Ghosts* is like a Greek play, because no catastrophe happens on the stage. I can't feel that. It seems to me rank where a Greek play would be strong. There's a good deal of heredity in *Œdipus*, and the subject is quite as revolting, but the difference of treatment prevents one from feeling it in the same way. The Greeks are wild to kill themselves because they have outraged convention, the Scandinavians are wild to kill convention, because it has outraged them. No, I don't think I've put it fairly for the Greeks.

July 23rd, 1891.

These wonderful late nights and early mornings, when there is nothing to be seen but the sky, no sound but the sea, no distinction but of sun or moon, fill all my mind for the time being, and drown the very thought of self. There is no struggle to be rid of it, no slaying of it first and rising above it. It goes. I feel so near to God, that there is no need to pray, any more than if I were one of His birds.

May 4th, 1892.

When we were out this afternoon, we saw the larks descending to the ground, almost without a flutter of their wings, as if they flew upon their singing. Some people's lives are like that; they progress by harmony rather than movement.

Whether we love each other because we are like or because we are different, or—as I am far more inclined to believe—for no reason whatever, which is as much as to say for some reason so deep that the mind of man cannot fathom it—is a question to which I never find any answer that satisfies me. For I think it's very seldom that we are alike really, any two of us. The points at which we touch are almost infinitesimal compared with the vast tracts of difference. In the beginning love is often helped by the fancy that it detects a similarity which does not exist, but by the time he has found out his mistake he is far too happy to care anything about such a trifle as that.

July 13th, 1894.

One gets a hunger for certain faces and to feel a certain kind of love round one. That of the ——'s is all sheltering and spoiling and yet it strengthens one, and drives one's worst self right away. I can't think how they do it. It is the very High Art of Love. There is an art of it, I 'm certain. Some people never get beyond being brilliant amateurs, and some are good serious students, always learning their lessons in it, but without any original taste. How funny an exhibition of us would be if we were all hung

up as each other's 'Works'! Here a bit of character moulded by this one, there another moulded by that one, each with its own stamp on it.

April 28th, 1895.

I longed for something to draw me out of myself, not to sink me down into it. If it 's lovely, it 's lovely, but if it 's not, it 's a good deal worse than nothing to me. Just during the last few minutes, these words flashed into my mind out of emptiness, 'Surely, the Lord was in this place and I knew it not.' That pleased and rested me. On the Mount of Transfiguration only can we say, 'Lord it is good for us to be here,' but of almost every bit of life we might say, 'The Lord was in this place,' and even if we do not know it at the time, it is something to know it after.

July 1896.

I wonder if people who have a garden enjoy it so absurdly as Londoners enjoy one flower? The great tiger-lily that L——'s father brought wastes my time almost as well as a fire in winter.

'Pure lilies of eternal peace,' indeed! This one 's a real tiger. As for the four little sunflowers in two pots on the leads—or sunleaves rather, for the flowers lie yet in the dark abyss of the future,—they have given me many a 'green thought in a *black* shade.' And I become unfriendly to the Sun himself, if I think he is scorching them, and beseech the winds of Heaven that they visit them not too roughly.

Mephisto would have had me by the wrist often enough, I have said to so many moments of life, 'Stay, thou art fair!' In solitude—*à deux*—even *à trois*. (To be happy in threes is, I believe, a great test of the capacity for being happy at all.) Only they never stayed. And you have as much chance of finding the same moment again as the same mortal. Joy is a host of happinesses, each quite unlike all the rest. A thud behind me. Only the lily falling to bits. I did so want her to stay till to-morrow, so that the St. T——s might see her. But she won't stay. She is fair.

March 21st, 1897.

There's one desire I never can resist—a longing to break the great black root, a lump of coal, and free the golden flower within. What if people do call it prosaically 'poking the fire from the top'?

March 29th, 1897.

To catch the sun and keep him in a book—what a hopeless business! Yet never twice the same clouds gather round him touched with the same colours; it is human to grasp at them.

> Thy sun, that Adam saw, that the last man shall see,
> Shining on thousands also shone on me.
> And one white flower of Thine born yesterday
> To wither in a sunny week away,
> Sweet to me only, to none other sweet,
> Sent up its honied fragrance at my feet.

A fragment of grey cloud showed against the gold disk

like a headless cross. Then the disk was striped by little swords and daggers of light—light upon light.

For me the hero of the hour is that Duke of Parma who besieged Antwerp in the days when people wore ruffs. He dedicated the siege to the Virgin Mary and named one of his forts after her and one after his king. 'Oh, for half an hour of Alexander in the field!' the soldiers used to cry; and wherever he went they won. Alexander Farnese was his magnificent, ruff-like name. I am also more in love with Sir Philip Sidney than ever. He died of a wound in the thigh, and as he lay dying, he asked them to sing him a song called *The Broken Thigh* that he had made! So funny—so pathetic, somehow. And he was always telling the other people, who were in agonies of tears, that he didn't mind in the least—in fact he rather liked it. Have you ever read Motley? It is so fascinating. And then one turns to the *Daily Telegraph*, and there is the Kaiser giving the King thirty-two hideous silver-gilt baskets designed by himself—ugh! (I never do say *ugh!* but it 's a comfortable word to write —so much disgust in it.)

How curious that personal touch is in the great French historians. Is it for want of that that ours are such dry stuff in comparison? Michelet falls ill of overwork. '*J'ai abattu trop de rois*,' and he does another enchanting volume. Qualifications absolutely necessary for a good historian: 1. Imagination; 2. Prejudice; 3. the power of writing your own biography at the same time.

How dull is the *Life of Dean Church*! How much worse than dull the *Life of Dr. Pusey*! I think the devil writes religious biography. There's much more real religion in the *Bacchae* of Euripides, which is simply glorious—a sort of Greek Salvation Army business, all drums and cymbals and ecstasy. Macaulay says he hasn't the least idea whether Euripides meant to run up or run down fanaticism, but it's one of the finest things going. The revel of vine and ivy and bryony and wind—blown torches and roofless rocks and wild delirious joy in freedom and music and open air—is quite intoxicating. Then there's Bacchus himself, the god come down in the likeness of man, the men of Thebes refusing to understand, obstinate not to worship him, punished accordingly. There's no real tipsiness as far as I can make out. The Hallelujah Lasses get drunk on the wine of the spirit, not the wine of the grape.

II.—From 1897 to 1907

When you spoke about sex the other night, I didn't think much about it, but to-day I did, and I know now that I didn't feel with you, and that it does seem to me to be an eternal distinction. I don't think we are separate only in body and in mind, I think we are separate in soul too, and that a woman's prayer is as different from a man's as a woman's thought or a woman's hand. I cannot think of souls that are not masculine or feminine . . . but just as the negation of sex is inconceivable to me, so is its unification; I cannot think that we shall be men as well as women, and men women as well as men. If we do not retain sex I don't see how we can retain identity.

Male and female we were created; it is of the very essence of our nature.

E—— and I went to the National Gallery on Saturday. We looked at many pictures, but we thought at six—the three ideal Knights—Giorgione's, Raphael's, Velasquez's, two Madonnas, and Botticelli's 'Assumption of the Virgin.' Certainly Botticelli was one of those who saw 'Heaven opened,' though it thrills one to think how Heaven has widened and widened since the day that he finished his last golden circle of stars.

Woman with a big W bores me supremely. How γυνή would have puzzled the beautiful concrete Greeks. It is a mere abstraction born of monks and the mists of the North. A woman I know, but what on earth is Woman? She has done her best to spoil history, poetry, novels, essays, and Sir Thomas Browne and Thoreau are the only things safe from her; that's why I love them.

I have been reading Amiel all day, out in the garden, where every blade of grass shone like a little sword, and in the chalk hollows and on the cliff over the sea. It would be better for me if I did not understand him so well perhaps. He ought to have been a woman and married Thoreau. Thoreau is the masculine half of him, and he would have just had courage enough to say yes to the right person, though he never proposed to the right person himself for fear she should happen to be the

wrong. Perhaps it was not even for fear of that. To have asked the question, 'Is it worth while?' is to have answered it in the negative. He accuses himself of cowardice, *Timidité*; the word comes over and over again. But was it really fear? Was it really anything stronger than indifference to all life except that of his own intellect? I don't know. 'Nothing venture nothing have.' Better he had married recklessly three times, like Milton, and generally wrong. As a critic, '*il a toutes les intelligences de la tête et du cœur.*' It is exquisite. I couldn't help being pleased to find that Mozart twice reminded him of Plato, that books angered and soothed him as if they were people, that his will-lessness depressed him more than their wilfulness depresses others.

Amiel's power of drowning himself in the existence of another, whether that other be God or a daisy, is very wonderful. He seems to have retained mentally some of that strange power of transformation that a child experiences before it is born. He identifies himself not that he may love better, but that he may understand more; it is a very unusual kind of sympathy.

I read some of Medea; it stiffens one's mind to do a bit of Greek. Classic folk despise Euripides, but after all he was Milton's man. Medea is thoroughly *fin de siècle*; says she would rather go into battle three times than have a baby once, pitches into men like anything. But there's too much Whitechapel about her. How are you to be seriously interested in a woman who has murdered her mother and boiled her father-in-law before the play begins? So different from the gentle Phædra, and the wonderful Antigone and Helen.

We have got about fifty books, and if it were not for the extraordinary dulness of the Popes, I should be perfectly happy. Why is no Pope interesting except the Papa of Cæsar Borgia? Nuns are charming, monks fascinating, even an Archbishop may please, but the minute a man becomes a Pope he thinks of nothing but Bulls and Councils and slanging the Emperor of the period. I take a personal interest in the Anglo-Saxon nuns of the ninth century, because if I had happened to be born then instead of in the nineteenth, I should have had to enter a convent from the impossibility of getting books anywhere else. They were obliged by their abbesses to read two hours a day, and they wore fringes (for which the bishops had them up), and corresponded with St. Boniface, or any other saint they could find, in bad Latin, and went to Rome on pilgrimage whenever they were tired of one another, and were dreadfully afraid of meeting Saracens there. Five hundred of them once danced for joy on the grave of a novice-mistress whom they hated, till the earth sank in half a foot, and the Abbess condemned them to fast three days on account of the hardness of their hearts. My opinion is that unmarried ladies had a high old time of it in those days.

Nothing has such deadly power to corrupt as unalloyed virtue.

I have spent the whole day murdering flowers. Philanthropy is like your sins, it finds you out. There was I sitting in the verandah this morning, reading of Michelet, wishing no ill to any one, when by comes nice, good Mrs.

—— and inquires whether I wouldn't like to go and help her pick cowslips to be sent up to the flower-girls in the worst street of London. Having broken my back for two hours over this performance (in the course of which I made many reflections on the nature of cowslips and of nice, good women), I calculated that I must have earned about 3d. towards the hat or flannel-petticoat of Spitalfields. I should have had quite two shillings worth of pleasure out of Michelet. From a money point of view it doesn't pay. However I *dédommagéd* myself by gathering an enormous bunch of flowers afterwards for home-consumption.

Yesterday F. and I were gathering primroses. One of the dearest things about Nature to me is her secrecy. There were all those thousands of yellow stars, and yet if we had waited a year she would no more have let us see the exact moment at which every bud changed to a flower than she would have told us the very point at which Celia left off being a baby and grew into a child.

How I do love the tossing and kissing and crushing of the waves. It's like the encounter of strong-hearted friends, half play, half warfare, and half surrender; O dear! I forgot there couldn't be three halves to a thing.

The result of leaving children to the guidance of nature is so very dreadful; and the men and women who say they live according to nature are even more intolerable than the children. If I follow nature, I

scream when I have a tooth out, I eat eleven strawberries when there are twelve on the table, I come down late to breakfast, there's no end to the inconvenient things that I do. Is it dreadfully Philistine to say these things? I am not—as you see—in love with nature—no doubt because I *do* live in accordance with nature myself. But I don't think the result charming.

If it turns out that the world is the Church, and the Church is the world, why, the Sinners must just forgive the Saints and the Saints must learn to stand being forgiven.

(From Treworlas)

I hardly ever write—and never read. After all, the earth was made before books.

On Wednesday I heard Prof. Flinders Petrie on The Development of Research in Egypt. A thousand years were as a day, and one day as a thousand years. It was wonderful to hear him tossing time about like a magician. There on the table stood a little chipped vase that was 6000 years old. And he went back to *9000* B.C. It appears that we have not improved in weaving since 5000. He spent last winter high up on Sinai, with nineteen other diggers, five days from their food supply, in the freezing cold, unearthing an Egyptian temple. The Egyptians used to go there to look for turquoise, and there they set up numbers of 'pillars,' like the one that Jacob set up at Bethel when he had not known 'that

there was a God in this place,' and there the Inspectors of the works prayed for oracular dreams to guide them to a vein of turquoise. A very superior way of mining to ours in South Africa, I think. I don't wonder that they found the treasures of the earth—that they made lovely use of them when found. They leant on the Eternal, and there is something of eternity visible in their work. I don't believe people will find and rejoice in diamonds from the De Beers mine thousands of years hence. The earth will take her own again—and quite right too. Only that which is earth returns to the earth.

How is it that people with beautiful minds can always write such lovely things about dull, leaden, wildly foolish sleep, that robs us of nearly half our little life, and makes such fools of us that we are ashamed to think of what it did, when we are awake? (This is a little bit of private, personal spite, because I never have any good dreams.) I don't like sleep. I'm not the friend of sleep. I've slept too much. I passionately admire old Sir Thomas Browne—

> O come that day when I shall never
> Sleep again, but wake for ever.

Though it is an imagination beyond imagination to conceive—and terrible as 'No night there'—of which, it is, I suppose, a rendering. As for its being the cure of mortal woes, they're always twice as bad when one wakes up—it's mere opium. Beddoes was right, in his beautiful little Dirge, when he wrote first—

> If thou wilt ease thine heart
> Of love and all its smart,
> Then sleep, dear, sleep!

and then—

> But wilt thou cure thine heart
> Of love and all its smart,
> Then die, dear, die !

I wrote out lately four Sonnets on Sleep, four great big Sonnets, by Griffin, Daniel, Sidney, Drummond, respectively.

The first verse of this [a poem sent her] reminds me sweetly of three of Sidney's lines—

> Take thou of me smooth pillows, sweetest bed,
> A chamber deaf to noise and blind to light,
> A rosy garland, and a weary head.

The rosy garland would be rather in the way? I'm glad you haven't got that. Yours is a most beautiful little dear poem, I think. I delight in it all except verse two, which is not equal to the rest. Somehow I don't care about the sky 'teeming' with fancies, and would any one want a gnome in a garden? The flowers wouldn't!

When I had finished it [Stevenson on 'The South Seas,'] I seemed to hear Mr. Cory say again, 'Poor fellow! Knows no Latin and Greek! How I should like to teach him!' Never in any other book of his did the thought come across me. I never minded whether he knew Latin and Greek or not. But now I feel dimly, somehow or other, that if he had been a classic, he would not have lost the fine edge of his refinement out there—he would not have allowed himself one or two coarse and bloodthirsty touches which I think Mr. Cory would not have liked. It is curious,

how often I find myself referring and deferring to what I fancy his judgment would have been about some book. And how unsafe to speculate! For one could never tell. Besides the terrific knowledge, he had that vein of caprice which seems to me sometimes to mark out all the really great critics—men who were poets before they turned to criticism—men like Sir Philip Sidney, Charles Lamb, Mat Arnold, FitzGerald and so on.

I am delighted with your beautiful Yeats letter. Yes, what an elf of thought he is!

Are you fond of Motley? I've been besieging Antwerp over again. I shall never get over it, that that rocket did not go up to tell the fleet at Lille that the fire-ship *Hope* had broken Parma's bridge. How magnificent, the dead commander leading the Old Spanish Legion to victory on the narrow dyke between the two seas! 'In that superstitious age'—says Motley—but it made me think of Mr. Cory. 'I don't know what he means,' he said once, quoting a great passage of Ruskin from *Modern Painters* about the ghostly Brethren leading the Roman Soldiers. He said it as if he were pleased not to know.

Ah, but how often the great ghosts of their dead have cheered the Roman Catholics on to win! There does not seem to be that power of resurrection in Protestantism, though we have our fire-ships of *Hope*. And the dead prevail, against fire even.

Shakespeare has no conscience about the people his second heroines marry. That Oliver and Celia match was a bad business. But nothing to Claudio and Hero.

Now you will think me a worldling—I am—but you made me feel sorry a little for the 'large and fashionable congregation.' There are sad hearts under fashionable clothes as well as under rags. There were Kings in the Bible whose prayers were heard, as well as beggars? Why may we not

> Go together to the Kirk
> In a goodly company?

There is something in the mere fact of numbers when they sing—when they are silent—that makes the Hymn or the prayer different from that at home—more inspiriting to some people and less of an effort. And though Our Lord said so much about private prayer He went often to the public service in the Temple or the Synagogue, and did He not mean us to learn from His life as well as from His words? I do not care for crowded services—nor for frequent services of any kind—but there was a time when I did, and I understand the feelings of those who do, and who like to worship among people of like kind with themselves rather than among the bewildering poor who are different in cleanliness and different in taste—or in a loneliness the heights and depths of which they cannot always measure.

. . . We did homage to Velasquez together at the Guildhall. What an elfin thing the influence of genius

is! Half the little girls in London have turned into little Spanish Infantas, because their mammas think it can be done with a bow on the side of the head.

I know so little about Pandora. She had a box with a lot of troubles in it, and Hope at the bottom, hadn't she? They didn't look upon Hope in the Pauline way? as a virtue? It certainly seems more like a gift.

Christian artists have blinded Justice, but they never blinded Hope, which makes one think they believed in the human race more than Æschylus did.

The difficulty in teaching about death is, it seems to me, that you must make the teaching transcendental, and yet, if the child is fully inspired with the thought that it is 'The entrance to a better life,'—and a child believes that so very easily and readily—the first time it comes across death at close quarters, it will be so utterly unprepared for the horror of it—for the shock of the inconsistency of passionate grief—funerals—mourning—that it will run the risk of losing belief altogether. I know it was so with me.

I've just been to see a most exciting picture by Piero di Cosimo (the Renaissance painter in *Romola*, you know—there are only about 15 of his works extant). It's the battle of the Centaurs and the Lapithæ out of Ovid, and they say every detail of the passage is

rendered. I never knew there were lady Centaurs. I was deeply touched by one lovely dear, half of her a white horse and half of her a beautiful gold-haired lady with lilies, mourning over a Renaissance gentleman Centaur who has had the good taste to die in her arms. She has a lovely ear like a shell, just fringed with fur, as if she didn't quite know whether it were human or not.

How much more agreeable sporting ladies would be if they were only half a horse in body as well as in mind! The rollicking fun of part of the picture is most remarkable—and the terrific enjoyment of the struggle. One Centaur has pulled up an altar to throw, and the incense is still smoking on it. Another is tugging at the trees to uproot them. All this gorgeous stuff to be seen for nothing. You just walk in, and intelligent men hum round you and give you printed descriptions. How cheap the best things are!

'Tis only Heaven that is given away.

'I've just been thinking how wonderfully Milton—the insatiable knower—recommends Temperance in knowledge even, in that passage about the Trees of Life and of Knowledge in Bk. iv.—

Knowledge of good, bought dear by knowing ill.

I shouldn't have known beforehand that he would think it was 'bought dear.' 'Tis a hard question, even now.

After all, 'We're all going to Heaven, and Vandyck's of the company.' We *must* remember that, if we're

Christians, we of all people *must* have least to do with despair.

(*After seeing Hamlet at Stratford*). Benson's delivery of the great speeches was admirable. At the end he struggles up to the throne *à la* Forbes Robertson and then falls into Horatio's arms and dies there, falling forward. I don't care for this; I suppose somebody will elect to die standing on his head next. And I don't care for the business of tangling the King in a fishing-net before he stabs him. No. Nobody fights like Sarah, and nobody dies like Forbes. When I'm in Heaven, I shall order a week of performances of *Hamlet* thus: *Mon.*, Benson; *Tues.*, Forbes; *Wed.* and *Thur.*, Irving; *Fri.* and *Sat.*, Sarah. Ellen Terry to be Ophelia always. Will you come too?

FALMOUTH.

I thought of you last night as I sate in the dusk on our tiny lawn, and watched the stars twinkle out and the lights of the ships. This is a fairy place. You see the boats gliding about over the blue water like moths and great white butterflies, and never a man do you see. You see the lamps at night and never a man to light them. One poor old steamer lies just opposite our windows, and has lain there for ten months, forlornly waiting for a cargo that doesn't come, with only two men, the captain and the bo'sun. . . . They have the gift of fernseed, they walk invisible, we have not seen them once. Round the corner lies Falmouth.

TITI SEE.

What an odd thing is the 'lust of the eyes.' Sometimes, if everything is ugly, I can't feel gay in the least, however *comfortable* it is; and here, where I suppose the cold and the damp really are uncomfortable, I can't succeed in minding them at all, because there's a hill that appears and vanishes at the end of the lake, and because of the floating spectres of mist shifting and drifting among the fir-trees, and because of the changing paths down hither and thither over the landscape. It is all very well to read when the others are there, but if I am alone for five minutes even, I can hardly tear myself from the window. It is never the same, and it is always beautiful.

DORSET.

I hardly ever touch a book or a pen. The sky is greater reading than the Bible, the sea than Shakespeare. The words have not been born that could describe what I feel. 'I was dumb and opened not my mouth, for it was thy doing.' Funny, what waste of time all doing seems by the side of being! And yet I know that the least little thing done is better than all this fine dreaming. . . . Words cannot express my aversion from every form of industry.

BAMBOROUGH.

All day we sat in the golden ragwort, the swallows flying close to us, watching the gulls, the terns, the dunlins and the hovering hawks. I can't tell you how beautiful it was. When the moon rose we sat and

watched her in the doorway. What is there that charms one so in the mere rising and falling of tides?

A marvellous thing it is to any one standing for the first time in the gold and crimson spangled darkness on that part of the Tower Bridge that behaves like other bridges, to watch the signal spots of red at the mast of some tall ship, to mark a slender rope stretched, to hear a bell rung, slowly, and in an instant to see the solid centre of the bridge heave up, unresting and unhasting, so gradually that not a tiny pebble on it moves, so unceasingly that the twined shadows of the railings fall every second into new lacework—to see it fill the arch like the vast and mystical curtain that hid the veiled image in the temple—to see it once more drop again, in the same soft and stately manner, without a sound, to meet its other half.

HENFIELD, SUSSEX.

I think the Sleeping Beauty and Co. must have fallen asleep in this place and infected the neighbourhood. I fall asleep all day long. And I dream a horrid dream about a flying fish that I've got to catch, all covered with brown fur, and the minute I've caught it, it flies away down Portland Road. Everything is very beautiful —sleepily beautiful, not dreamily. The robins are distracting; they hop from bough to bough among the apple-trees, and answer each other singing—

Their words are words,
Our words,
Only so much more sweet.

There's a lonely church too, with processions of yews walking about and about it, and yellow roses twined among them; and as you go through, a rose will kiss your cheek and leave a drop of dew there.

CHARMOUTH, DORSET.

This is such a lovely place, and every moment stolen from sea and sky seems to be wasted. I lie out on the cliff, the great blue over, the great blue under, and watch a wee butterfly hang like a flower on a bit of dry grass. And then the sun sets behind the hills in a pale gold and red sky, and the sea catches the red and gold, and the soft headlands lie ghostly grey between. . . . Perhaps nothing *thrills* us that is not or has not been in some way human! . . . The least little scrap of ruin would make it different. A light in a cottage window —and there you are! But I don't feel as if I could want anything different just now and here. I love to drown —to forget all about human beings—not to know I'm a woman. . . . The other want comes back of course; but while it's away—and when the sun shines—what an adorable place the world is!

We have been having a discussion about 'old ancient' things. I never can feel the age of mountains; it does not impress me in the least, and I don't think age, unconnected with anything human, is impressive. After all, the earth that makes the road in 12 Cromwell Place is just as old as they are, in reality. Of course the oldest building is an infant in comparison with the youngest and most babyish mountain, but then it is old

collectively with the age of all the hands that have touched it, the ages that have seen it, the hearts that have beat in it. A mountain will be as young as ever at the last day. There 's no pathos of age except where it touches humanity.

Snow mountains have never fascinated me. Switzerland seems to me to have got no heart. I just admire it, but I don't love it in the least. I would fifty times rather be in the Black Forest, or among the soft blue hills of Savoy.

Scenery is all very well . . . but I'm a stranger among mountains. I am at home in the flat, skiey land. More to me are the lonely gracious trees that can grow as they like, than the trees that have to grow as the mountains like. And I hate a wall that says 'You can't see the sun yet,' and 'Now you shan't see the sun any more.'

(From the Lake Country.)

The hills about the place are alive. Sometimes they're not hills at all, but mist that has taken a fancy to look like that, sometimes they lie asleep, sometimes they die and vanish, sometimes they spring and lift themselves, sometimes they are low and little, sometimes they turn giants, sometimes they are pink and gold, like the Holy Land. They only obey one rule so far as I can make out, and that is, never to be two minutes the same. . . . I sit and think of nothing.

I feel as if my whole body were my eyes, as if I never wanted it to be anything else. . . . Wordsworthian animals abound. All the cows and sheep look as if they knew the *Ode to Immortality* by heart. I'm sure they are all immortal. Sometimes they look as if they were going to recite *Betty Foy*, but then I run away.

I can't tell you what the sunsets are here. Pink clouds and silver moon—gold clouds and a gold moon—grey clouds and no moon—it does not matter in the least. The quiet, solemn feeling of gladness sweeps over one like a great wave. It buries all the restlessness, all the anxiousness, all the vanity. And at night there is the wide sky—sometimes a few stars that are friends, sometimes hosts upon hosts of lonely strangers with them.

(Of Knaresboro'.)

It was an elfin town last night, a red round ball of lightless sun sinking away behind the slender, delicate trees. There, and there only, the hours pass. Here [Harrogate] they stand still.

Light has such different ways with it; in some places it lies, in some it falls, in some it strikes. . . .

I've just been reading Tennyson's *Love and Duty* over again. What a marvellous thing it is! No event, no character, nothing on earth to explain; only those two tremendous words fighting it out together in perfect silence. And what a deep, fine feeling, to end it with

dawn, not with the night and stars, as a meaner poet would almost certainly have ended.

As to reason and feeling, they are always pulling me different ways, and I really don't know what to make of them. Do you think they are the man and woman faculties in us? Feeling seems to me the highest, but many people would say just the reverse. Feeling goes higher and deeper, is at the same time more instinctive and animal, and more divine, and takes a short cut where reason goes a very long way round; but reason is stronger, more reliable because it's more permanent, and not so apt to make terrific mistakes. If it comes to a fight between the two I follow the former nine times out of ten . . . And nine times out of ten I go wrong.

The law of love, which is freedom; if we could only be ruled by that! But alas, too often, even where people love, and love intensely, they won't obey love's perfect law! Still I do think there is a strong tendency now to see that that is the only thing that can bring a man 'peace at the end.' The very abhorrence of the word 'Duty,' which some people affect, shows it.

No play in the world comes near *Hamlet*, of course; nothing ever could. I'm tempted to think I love the sonnets more than all the plays, *Hamlet* included. But this is flat heresy—and only to be said in a whisper.

I've been re-reading *The Tempest*, which reminded me

of some words by Bell Scott (the only words I ever saw in a book that recalled my own childhood to me) to the effect that childhood is not an earthly Paradise, but an enchanted island, full of strange noises and haunted by a Caliban.

There are some words that are like a flight of steps that end in mid-air, and there is nothing but the sky above them. Poetry is, by its very derivation, *making*, not feeling. But the odd thing is, I think, that what is most carefully made often sounds as if it had been felt straight off, whereas what has been felt carelessly sounds as if it were made.

I've been reading Rossetti's letters, and Matthew Arnold's. There's just this difference between them, that Rossetti was a poet, and Matthew Arnold was a man who wrote poetry. *Qua* poetry, it does not matter in the least, but *qua* letters, Rossetti beats Matthew Arnold into a cocked hat. It's funny to find the dividing line so marked in their prose. But the *Vailima Letters* beat them both, and most others into the bargain. Stevenson was a poet who couldn't write poetry, but could and did live it.

The Venetian pictures at the New Gallery are distracting. . . . It's just like 'A Toccata of Galuppi's.'

'Dear dead women, with such hair too! What's become of all the gold?' For they are dead, dead, dead, as dead as the dodo. Take off their armour and their

beloved little Quickly caps, and the Generals, and the Admirals and the Doges would translate into nineteenth century English quite easily; but we have lost those ladies for evermore. We never could be so broad as that, however hard we tried, nor so brown-eyed and red- and golden-haired. They couldn't be revived, not if we wore their clothes at twenty masquerades. They have no souls whatever to speak of, but oh! you never saw such fascinating coins! There are three that are not coins, by the way—a perfect Magdalen carrying a chalice, that used to be called 'St. Barbara,' and *is* St. Barbara if she's St. anything—and a lovely Lotto, whose soft grey eyes are as refreshing as dew in the golden hazel and amber gleaming of all the rest—and a tall, mysterious, bushy-locked Lady Professor of Bologna, with her hand resting on a skull. She's thinking unutterable things you long to know. Some people think she must be a man, because she's so tall; but she has little soft white hands, and the way she stands is a woman's way, not a man's. It is the strangest, most dream-like feeling, to be in the midst of these silent and secret lives, these faces that are so many sealed books. There is a much larger proportion of portraits than usual, so that it has the effect of a little world, complete in itself, not interrupted by too many excursions into the other. You have to say to yourself *Penso, non dormo,* like the marble cupid, with bandaged eyes, in the Hall. The fountain bubbles away, surrounded by a well of red marble, covered with angels and flowers, and black Othello pages stand round, and the very lanterns that lit the Doge's barge when he went to marry the Adriatic hang over it.

. . . Is it not Tintoretto who makes the Tempter a young and beautiful man? I always have wanted to see that picture at Venice. In Tissot's he was an old and hideous brown man, holding up two stones which had a ghastly look of skulls about them. The Temptation on the roof of the Temple was very fine—the Evil One a kind of spider's web of shadow behind, everywhere—nowhere—at once. (Millais' Evil One sowing tares is the finest I ever saw, I think, for concentrated rage, envy, baseness, love of evil for evil.) The more one thinks of it, the more impossible it seems to depict such a spirit conflict at all. But there are things that Art is bound to try, and never to accomplish, and the very effort after them, given that it is the highest effort of the imagination, interests more than success. Blake might have succeeded in a moment of inspiration that most people would have called madness.

Words could not say how deeply I agree that they are but a very superficial part of language. Where so much is played, painted, looked, touched, felt, they do seem inadequate; and it is quite true that, very often, you might as well try to paint a piece of music as to explain a picture. Still, there are certain limits, it seems to me, within which one art may lawfully help another, and such a description as Pater's, for instance, of Mona Lisa, shows literature as the hand-maid of Leonardo. The fine arts are all fine ladies, and they cannot replace each other or lay down the law for each other, but they may exchange courtesies now and again?

Socrates was my earliest love, and, all things considered,

I think he'll be my latest. There's something of marble in all the loftiest Greek characters. But it's the coldness of perfect calm, of perfect dignity—not the iciness of pride, and that makes all the difference.

I believe the Elizabethan sense of love and friendship was much stronger and more sensitive, and closer to the Victorian, than anything in between.

I am with you. I am with you. I am with you about *Clarissa Harlowe*. It is one of the most wonderful of novels—thoroughly unhealthy, don't you think? I found it was a favourite with Mademoiselle de Lespinasse, and was not at all surprised. It seems to me one of the few books that are like an experience, you are not quite the same after you have read it as you were before. *Richard Feverel* is another. *Résurrection* is another. I suppose there's nothing to compare with it for minuteness except *The Ring and the Book*; but *The Ring and the Book* goes in for 'goodness,' and not for 'virtue,' and what a difference that makes!

How difficult I find it to think of anything just now except Port Arthur! It is odd to find oneself in such ardent sympathy with an alien race against whites. . . . My heart goes out to Togo. For one thing, I am so much obliged to him for having such a short and cheerful name. Ito, in his two-storied country house, with his black-silk-haired wife and quiet little maid-servants, and his four pet storks in a cage by the sea, I adore. *A bas*

Alexiev! But for the Tzar I have infinite pity—not understanded of H——, who thinks him a weakling. So he is, but it is a tragic position for a man strong enough to desire peace with all his heart, not strong enough to enforce it, obliged to be the figurehead of War, and go to church in public, and pray Heaven for what he knows is accursed.

The Blake pictures in Ryder Street are amazing. I think he and Turner are the greatest things we have ever had in the way of paint. But as a rule I refrain from mentioning him—as I refrain from mentioning Gordon—because I am always told he was mad. *Un fou qui meurt nous lègue un Dieu.* I remember you had a passion for that cry of Béranger's too. I am all on the side of madmen.

Rodin's *Penseur*, the big statue, is rather gigantic than great I think—but great too. He thinks with everything—his great groping feet think. Only the hands hang slack—which is true to thinking nature. The only statue that he reminds one of is Michael Angelo's Penseroso—but Rodin's is a rough man, not born to think, thinking because he must, and not because he would.

I don't know whether you would like the fat new *Life of Dumas* by Davidson? It was a great excitement to me, but then I'm 'a Dumasser of the first class'—and I rather think you're only of the second. Have you

read all the three great series, as well as the ten volumes of Memoirs right through, and when you came to the end did you wish there were at least ten volumes more? That is the test. As for this *Life*, the first part consists of the *Memoirs* watered down and spoilt, but the rest, after 'thirty-two, when the *Memoirs* stop, is very amusing. He bought a vulture and towed it along by a rope, and called it Jugurtha. Afterwards it took to a tub, and then it was called Diogenes. When I get to Heaven (perhaps *if* might be a more suitable beginning) Dumas is the first person I shall ask for. And I shall ask him to bring all his five hundred children.

I am still struggling with *Wahrheit und Dichtung*. It reminds one of

> Crabbèd age and youth
> Cannot live together.

He's always saying, Once I was young, and I did this—and then he gives an old man's reason for it. The result is not a charming portrait like that which Lewes gives, but a horrid composite photograph of both his ages. Nothing lives except Frederike and the two daughters of the dancing-master. Odd that another man could write Goethe's life so much better than he could himself! As an autobiographer he really is not in it with Benvenuto Cellini or Dumas *père*. I suppose poets do not know what they are made of, they're made of such very funny stuff.

We have just come back from a lonely little grey church, sunk in a churchyard blue with speedwell, and

largely attended by swallows. Every Sunday afternoon the Vicar catechises the children there, like a Christian Socrates. It's the most charming thing to hear. What an art that is, to ask questions in such a way that the people asked positively burn with the desire to answer. Out fly the little hands all over the place, and they can hardly wait their turns, they're so eager.

I went to see Celia at her gymnastics yesterday. But I am old-fashioned, and hate the hideous actions and the ugly language. Why am I forced to behold twenty-six lovely children squatting like little toads, and tumbling down on mats and swarming up ropes like cabin-boys? Why have they got to be told to 'Face the ribs!' and 'Forward the Trunk!' The *trunk* — how horrible! I hope and trust you don't tell Helen to forward her trunk? It made me long for *Chassée*, *Croisée*, and 'Set to your partner!' and the elegant, 'Now my dears, draw in the Sash!' instead of that odious, telegraphic form of address, as if every word cost a half-penny.

Yesterday, H—— read out Yeats' *Death of Cuchullin*, and then I asked for *Sohrab and Rustum* to compare. There are touches in Yeats that Mat Arnold can't beat, but the father and son are much finer in Mat Arnold, and no two lines of the Yeats dwell with one like

> Truth sits upon the lips of dying men,
> And falsehood, while I lived, was far from mine.

But how Mat Arnold does crib! My stars and garters!

that hyacinth straight bang out of Virgil is a bold one!

I am acting temporary Gamp to a dear little cousin who is down here all alone in a big empty house, separated from her children—three of whom have Scarlatina in barracks nine miles off—because she is expecting another little stranger in February. We live like two men in a lighthouse, avoided by every one, though she has been here by herself for about a month. She sings me Songs of the North, so that every evening about nine-thirty I become a furious Jacobite, and meditate profoundly on the advantage it gives a cause if you can call it 'Charlie,' or 'The Grand old Man,' or 'Joe.' I wish we had a Christian name for Free Trade. 'Wha wadna die for Cobden?' doesn't come off somehow. And Macedonia would be much the better if the title were not so long. When I am prepared to shed the last drop of blood in my body for the Stuarts, she leaves off, and we fall back upon *The Slaves of the Padishah.* Really Jokai is an extraordinary boon in the midst of a world full of Gamp Gampant and Scarlatina. If there were a prize for the maddest novel in the world, I should back this one. It begins about twenty times over, and every beginning goes one better than the last. It begins with the Sultan and a gourd full of ducats—it begins with a magnificent wedding and a fine triangular duel—it begins with a monastery and a monk who can hold a freebooter up in the air with one hand—it begins with a merchant who has maidens to sell, and firmly declines to sell the most beautiful maiden of all—it begins with—but perhaps you may be a little tired of hearing what it begins with. And

it never ends with anything at all. My conviction is, that we shall still be at the beginning of it when Doomsday comes upon us—and quite happy.

(Of April.)

The lark sings Vespers, the buds promise that they will flower to-morrow. The *promise* of this time of year is, I think, even more beautiful—if anything can be more beautiful—than the tender, brighter promise of the May —certainly than the fulfilment of the 'high Midsummer pomps' in June. I love the tracery of the bare boughs—the light veils of green—the song of the more joyous, less passionate birds before the nightingale has come.

(Of the Chapel designed by Mrs. Watts at Compton, Surrey.)

It is a Cemetery Chapel, but the cemetery is a small one, there are very few graves in it as yet, they lie on the slope of a hill, yews growing along the pathway that winds up through the trees, and at the top sits the Chapel in a corner, tall, angular, high-shouldered, the grave of Watts just beyond, the lilies withered, three wreaths of bay, of palm, of golden leaves. It is built of red brick, with curious terra-cotta reliefs of strange spiritual forms, knots, twined and twisted signs. Far away there are soft blue hills, and almost up to the door comes a field of poppies, after your own heart. The door looks Norman in the distance—it's a kind of second cousin of the lovely little door at Bamborough—but when you come close, it has, I think, something of a Moorish effect, from the rich linear decoration. There's a little pierced belfry above the roof in which the bell swings

clear. The whole effect is beautiful—wonderfully *living*, I think, because there is such variety, and no two ornaments are alike. You open the door and stand in a dark circle of the most intense colour. (The windows, lancets, are of clear glass, very high, tall, narrow.) It seems like a little daughter of St. Mark's. Angels, angels everywhere—angels alternately showing their faces and their backs—all with long, shield-like wings, meeting in a point under their feet, all their hands touching and swinging mystic bells. Round about, golden letters are traced—'The souls of the righteous are in the hand of God,' and 'Day unto day uttereth speech.' I looked in vain for 'Night unto night.' Lovely cherub heads adorn the ceiling. There is a tall candlestick in gesso like the angels, with 'The candle of the Lord' and four little figures—a figure of Body carrying a shield with a naked child on it, Mind with a lantern, Soul with a butterfly, Will (the priest) with a wheel. I can't describe the rich gloom, the glowing enamel-lit darkness, the peacock flash here and there round a cherub head, the gleamy mother-of-pearl. There is a golden altar, richly wrought. Above it a small painting, a hooded, heavily draped woman—Death, I suppose—brooding over a globe which she holds in her hand. I don't know what I wanted (have been trying in vain to think ever since), but it was not that. It gives me a curious feeling of vague disappointment. What did I want?

There are no words at all over the beautiful old-fashioned lych-gate, when one looks up instinctively, thinking to see 'I am the Resurrection and the Life.'

Close to the chapel outside is a recumbent cross of red stone, in the same style, over the grave of a woman, at the foot *Courage*, at the head *Amo*, on the arms *Amavi*

and *Amabo*, round it some Emersonian George Elioty inscription about hearts that beat with the world's great heart not being able to die. Curious, how one resents the modern look and the modern sound of words like that in such a place. Have they got it in them to grow old and full of silence? Will they, two or three hundred years hence, sound as Jeremy Taylor sounds to us now? If there had been only the three words:

I have loved.
I love.
I shall love.

that cross would have been perfect.

I cannot help wanting statues in a Cathedral. It is our fault if we bother about who they are. . . . Is not one conscious of a want? Surely they are the most beautiful ornaments of all? Mere transitory men and women are too slight. You want stone men and women to humanise the stone—men and women that will last, and connect all the fleeting generations at their feet. You want to see faces, just as you want to hear music—no, not just as, but in a different way! Does it not say something for statues too, that the Greeks, the great sculptors, adorned their buildings thus, and the mediæval people, the great builders, did the same?

I've got so much fresh air into me that I can't write. Do you know the feeling? You are so contented that you are dumb; everything in you is satisfied. How different it is from the rapture of happiness of people who understand each other! So incommunicable too! You

can never make any one else understand that you have been in heaven. They think you 're cold, or you 're by yourself, or you haven't got a chair to sit on, or something.

O blessed loneliness!
O lonely blessedness!

A hermit-crab am I by nature, and shall be, to the end of my days. And yet the human kind is a very good kind, and kindly human too. The little church here is sweet. All day it stands open, and you can run in when you like and see the sun shine through the wings of Angels. The power to do that is more to me than many services.

I spent a happy hour with a friend . . . among the old water-colours at Agnew's. *Oh!* how I love those old water-colours. Did anybody ever understand English elms and English rivers—slow, sleepy things—as De Wint did? He is a late passion with me, and a very strong one. In the days of my youth when I wanted fairy-tales, I had no eyes for him. Golden and blue and grey Turners there are too. O! we want these delights of London here. We can't get on in the dark without them.

. . . *Hippolytus* was exquisite. Such a pathetic Phaedra—tall, dark, willowy, throwing her white veil over her head in a way that showed one the ancient queenliness of the familiar kitchen-grief gesture of the apron. How charming was the old belief that all wrong passion was the work of the gods, so that you could always be profoundly sorry for every one and never felt shocked or angry. The love-charm of the Middle Ages is

less majestic somehow—more of a toy, and, to my surprise, more hard to believe in. I felt a compassion for Phaedra that I do not feel for Iseult. It is greater to be the victim of 'The Cyprian' than to be the victim of a stupid, well intentioned other woman. Then Hippolytus *selbst* is such a glorious character. And the scene between father and son, *the* scene for that kind of thing, not even faintly approached even by *Sohrab and Rustum*, though I am very fond of them too.

It was so satisfying to be calmed down by those perfect choruses after every harrowing moment. They did something that an opera, and a play apart, can never do.

. . . I have rapidly come to believe that construction is not nearly so important as people think. It is to a book what morality is to a person. But there are delicious books without any construction at all, and delicious people with no morality. I wrote this letter on top of a 'bus last night when all the lamps along the Brompton Road were flashing gold and mauve and crimson. Hence, you perceive, its brilliant incoherence.

We read d'Annunzio,—*Paolo e Francesca*, which is desperately hard, and I peg away at his poems. But it is rather like Heine with the wit left out, and I get tired of his being so tired of everything. Still he *is* very beautiful? But Plato would never have let him go near the Republic.

He must have been a very Dantesque man that wrote

Revelation. I should think Dante made for him first of all when he reached Paradise. I am beginning to wonder seriously whether it is worth while for a woman of nearly forty-two to read anything except St. John and Shakespeare.

How I do like *The Descent of Man*! . . . The way in which beasts, birds and fishes, all make love to each other is quite delightful. Fishes appear to be the most romantic wooers, but there don't seem to be any *constant* lovers, as far as I can make out, except pigeons, bullfinches and wild duck. Tame ducks immediately take several brides.

The tortoise has all C.'s heart. She rubs his shell with globe-polish. He seems to me to be such a very curious result of a diet of flowers. He eats nothing excepting an occasional buttercup, yet there he is, the prosiest animal you can conceive. It is as if a city man were to read nothing but Yeats and Austin Dobson, and yet remain a city-man.

I have fallen deeply in love with the Eastern weapons at Hertford House. They remind one of the armoury in that wonderful and awful poem of Browning's 'A Forgiveness.' They flicker in their shape like flames, and the gleaming jewellery sets off the horror of them with the daintiest beauty. Even the weapons of the Renaissance are curiously straight and dull and devious after these. The cold moony glitter of steel everywhere fills one with dreams.

Some time ago you wrote me a beautiful letter out of a garden. I waited for another garden to answer it. It seemed to me as if a garden ought to answer what a garden had said. But though I was twice in an ideal garden—once when it was beautiful with all the aid that man could give, a place that had been an old tilting-ground and now lies bright with flowers disposed after the Italian fashion, like a jewel among the Northumbrian moors — once in a place where it was beautiful with scarcely any aid from man, just a wild tangle of flowers, trees, bushes, ivy, clematis and an old wall —though it was twice the place, it was never the time, for the sun and I rarely happened to go there at the same hour, and when we did, I could not resist looking at him. And now the season of gardens is over, and the strange season of the tracery of bare boughs is about to begin and I cannot delay any longer. . . .

I liked so much the thought that you had, that we may 'some day go with the bloom and be with it always'; for spring is to me the dearest of all seasons, and I grudge every day of it as it passes. Autumn is a fine colourist, and winter etches even better than Whistler could, but there is nothing like the spring—

> And I called down a blessing
> On the blossom of the May,
> Because it comes in beauty,
> And in beauty blows away.

Do you know any of Yeats' poems? I am afraid of boring people with them, they seem to me so beautiful with the pathetic, tremulous beauty of Irish airs. The trees led you to the poets, and the poets to sympathy—and I was so glad to find that you identified it with imagination. Imagination only makes frost-work unless it is compact of sympathy.

Certain ages, like certain people, are never understood by certain others. To those who like angels to be all white, and devils all black, the confusion of such a period as the Renaissance is merely horrible. It bewilders and distresses them to find that even Savonarola played a double game; they can see no celestial justice in the fact that even Lucrezia Borgia, when she became a Duchess, was rather good.[1]

Conduct was, to an extent undreamed of now, the theme of public discussion. Every one got up every morning with the impression that everything was an open question, and there were very few family secrets, because there were very few actions left of which any one felt ashamed. . . . They have vanished, those rulers exceeding magnifical, who made the most of both worlds. Their Golden Roses are lost, their palaces—even Belriguardo, the fairest palace in Italy—are gone. But the Golden Rose of their art and their poetry blooms yet in the Muses' Garden, and Fancy builds the famous walls again whenever she sighs over to herself the soft-sounding name of Ferrara.[2]

How absurd to suppose that seeing ourselves as others see us should give pain! It is to see ourselves as others see us that we provide ourselves with looking-glasses, that we have our portraits painted and our photographs taken, that we rush to plays by Mr. Pinero.

Art is an odd thing, isn't it? It's almost the only thing that seems to me to remain unchanged throughout one's life, and it does away with all possibility of hell, and

[1] From *The Times Literary Supplement.* [2] *Ibid.*

all necessity of heaven. You forget the dead too, and yet you know it is no treason to forget them there. And you forget yourself.

I am so glad you have not got any books. Never, O! never, begin to have any! If you do, they all marry each other, and increase at the rate of half a library per annum. Then, when you have lived in the house forty-five years they have all got grand-children, and there is no room in the house for anything else whatever.

(From Dresden.)

Whether the Raphael Madonna still speaks Italian I do not know, for speak to me she will not. The truth is, I don't love her as much as I used to, and I believe she knows it. The Rembrandts are overpowering, especially 'Manoah's Sacrifice.' Manoah and his wife are kneeling together, rapt and humble, he a shade more humble, she many shades more rapt, her eyes closed, and the contrast of their folded hands enough to make one cry. There is an ineffable loveliness about her robes of blended white, soft yellow, and deep red. What a marvellous instrument red is, and how various in the hands of the great masters! It means such different things with Titian, Dürer, Millais.

It drives me mad when people call Rhodes 'an Elizabethan,' and say he is like Drake, of all people. Drake wouldn't have touched him with a pair of tongs; at least I hope not. I am pulled up in my want of charity by remembering that Gordon distinctly liked

and wanted him; but would he have liked and wanted him now?

We read the *Life of Dickens* of an evening. There is much that attracts, and something that repels me about him; I think, for one so deep in feeling, he was curiously superficial in thought. But what a wealth of genius! How it comes tumbling, bubbling out in his private letters! He doesn't care how often he misses, because he knows he'll hit just as often, and so he has his fling at every subject in the universe. And he *lives*.

I delight in the new metres [in Robert Bridges' *Demeter*], though . . . I often come to grief over them. I've been reading Tennyson's *Demeter*, which is lovely in its own way, but much less deep. The mother and daughter are altogether human. Well, so they are in the new one! but there's just that strange touch of remoteness—of far-away divinity—that makes it all different. Don't you love the crystal crown and the purple robe, and the grandeur of innocence? People are so apt to think it is only simple; they forget the awful dignity of it. There's a beautiful sonnet of Charles Lamb's that brought that home to me once.

(Of Shakespeare.)

I stayed at home and read *Two Gentlemen of Verona*. What a distracting play it is . . . why did I never find it out when I read it before? That's the charming thing

about great writing, it 's never the same twice over. When you come back to a place that you haven't been to for years I can't quite make up my mind whether it is most comforting or provoking to find it exactly the same, after all the Continental changes that one fancies have occurred in the geography of oneself. But when you come back to a play, you come back to find all the people saying perfectly different things in perfectly different voices. It seems odd that the women should be so much more cunningly drawn than the men. How many Julias one has known, gentle, jealous, generous, egotistic women, with a dash of vanity! Silvia is much more romantic really, though she doesn't go the length of a page's dress. She never thinks about her reputation, she doesn't strike the balance of her charms enthusiastically, like Julia. But she knows instinctively that one romantic person will help another, and that there 's a sort of Freemasonry of sentiment, and it 's this that makes her little relation with Sir Eglamour so pretty. I feel sure, too, it 's her pure romance that makes her care for Julia, whom she has never seen, merely on account of her sad story, and makes her give her picture to Proteus in the most inconsistent way, when she sees through him the whole time. I don't understand Valentine's speech in the last Act about giving up his rights in her to Proteus. It jars one. What did it mean? That Valentine cared much more for that calf Proteus than Proteus did for him is evident. But to go that length—and the very minute after he had found out Proteus's treachery! Of course, active, manly men are very oddly influenced sometimes by men with a greater gift of flowing speech. But nothing can make it seem natural. I suppose it *is* natural, or it wouldn't be there.

I am reading *Troilus and Cressida* over again, very slowly, inch by inch, scene by scene. 'Turn it about and turn it about for there's everything in it,' the Rabbis used to say of the Bible. One turns it about and turns it about and it is there; everything in Shakespeare, except the Bible. Even Robert Browning is there

'Things won are done. Joy's soul lies in the doing.'

I should have thought that was R. B.'s if I had met it 'howling in the wilderness,' as S.T.C. said of a line of Wordsworth's. And this is not much less like him: 'In the reproof of chance, Lies the true proof of men'; only it is better said. How repulsively Cressida is introduced. . . . She repels me even more than Cleopatra. . . . who is on too big a scale for one to mind much.

(*All's Well that Ends Well.*) I thought Helena was magnificent in Act i.—that she might be reckoned as one of those women who have ever proposed for men and kept their charm—the two others being Webster's Duchess of Malfi (she had to, because, though a perfect gentleman, he was only her steward) and (but this is a far cry, because it's a much slighter thing altogether, and she hadn't much charm to keep) Cherbuliez's Sarah, in *Après Fortune Faite.*

It's impossible to feel that the Duchess loses dignity for a single instant. She's far more beautiful than Helena. After Act i., it seemed to me Shakespeare fought shy of the real problem, and lost himself and her in a maze of tiresome intrigue. But I believe S. T. Coleridge thought the subject impossible. . . . How much

more delicately and poetically Hero manages her plot to catch Beatrice, than the men theirs for Benedick. The thing that passes me is how she could possibly forgive Claudio all in a minute like that. Claudio is impossible. The only point in his favour is that Benedick solidly liked him. I suppose he was a good soldier. And he does have one or two exquisite things to say. . . . I don't think Beatrice would have been the true heart she is if she had not yielded so quickly. Besides, I am, in my heart of hearts, almost certain that she did care before. He certainly did . . . The *grande dame* is not often a coquette, whatever else she may be; there were more *grandes dames* in Shakespeare's days than there are now, I imagine, and women had not been taught so carefully that it was modest to pretend they did not feel what they did. . . . I think *Measure for Measure* is one of the finest things that Shakespeare ever did, even among his marvels. . . . I don't quite know how to bear Isabella's terrible explosion of wrath when Claudio reveals his baseness. It hurts like steel; and yet, what else could she have said? The one blot on the play is that it is a play at all, and therefore Isabella is obliged to countenance the horrid truth about poor Mariana. The real Isabella could not have borne the thought of any woman being married to Angelo.

To-morrow week I am going to see *Hamlet* and *Macbeth*—where Shakespeare never saw them—at Stratford. By the way, is it not a delusion that Henry V. is his model King? He makes him cold, heartless, cruel — infinitely less attractive to women than Hotspur. Can't think why everybody adores him, just on the

strength of Crispin's day, and forgets his treatment of Falstaff, Katherine, his own father, and the prisoners.

They didn't deal in ideal men in the days of Elizabeth. They were extremely practical—and so is Henry V. Still they had a tendency to consider in a practical way what Heaven would think of them and their doings—one sees it in Henry's prayer; he knew his cause was bad the whole time.

We went to *Macbeth* the other day. Glorious! It sent me on for a week. Funny—that all those daggers and ghosts and witches and things should leave one perfectly reconciled and happy and stroked the right way. But what a very stupid woman Lady Macbeth really was! Fancy thinking that other people would think that two men would commit a murder and then go quietly to sleep, each one having just arranged his blood-stained dagger neatly on his pillow, for every one to see.

One can never be unhappy oneself without knowing that all griefs are (in a way) relations. And the uncertainty of one is the uncertainty of all. Then the comfort that *must* come is the comfort of all, too. They do bear it, they are helped to bear it. I think, more and more, that the unity of men is most wonderful—and the Unity that underlies, that overarches all.

I think with you about the way Silence prompts one to worship; I suppose it is the voice of God calling. To be silent means to feel oneself alone. 'And there is no place so alone, which He doth not fill.'

In the Abbey and at the Temple they sang, *In dulci Jubilo*. 'Would that we were there!' Don't you love it? And how I wish I were somewhere where you could be decently good without fighting people all round. I really would like to be good, only I hate fighting people. Why is it such a desperately difficult business? Would that we were there!

It is as difficult to be humble as it is easy to despair. Despair's a very conceited thing, but I might as well hope to be Michael Angelo as to be humble. The grace of the lowliest is only given to the highest.

Death is become a more practical thing now it is palpably so much nearer than in the days when I thought it was going to happen to-morrow. But it seems much farther off, as practical things do.

(ON THE DEATH OF JOACHIM)

To me, when a great light like that becomes a star, there is a most strange mingled feeling of intense thankfulness to have been allowed to be near it here—of quiet triumph in the course finished—of unspeakable grief at the loss, and fear lest that which was completely undeserved should never again be granted me.

If Robert Browning could grow old—think what a youth his must have been—surely we can. With love round us, and death before us, how can life ever be

commonplace? I know I think it can sometimes. And then I deserve—to die? No, to live to be ninety.

Here is ——, writing to me as to whether there is any room for angels 'in our new conceptions of earth and heaven.' *Our* new conceptions! If earth and heaven are not going to be any better than that, welcome the *néant*. I for one can't conceive any heaven that I shouldn't be tired of in a month . . . I suppose it's because she's such an angel herself that she thinks they can't be dispensed with so easily.

I don't think you would have disliked the allusion to Peter warming himself, if you had heard it. It was casual and passing—no stress was laid on it. Perhaps, without meaning to do so, I gave it undue importance from the fact that it appealed to me because I am myself the slave of warmth, and have so often neglected a duty because I was mesmerised by the fire.

I don't quite understand you about Pilate. Surely *his* strength, at any rate, was not 'to sit still.' He sat still and washed his hands, and it was all wrong. If he had 'put a decisive act between himself and temptation,' he would have seized his chance. What he did was the weakest thing he could do, not the strongest. It is only when sitting still is the hardest, most difficult course, that there is strength in it? Again I sympathise. I have so often made my own temptations much harder in the end, because I did not pluck up courage enough to do the decisive act, when I knew it ought to be done. We are not taught that we should let the temptation get as bad

as possible before we try to do anything; else why should we pray 'Lead us not into temptation'?

More and more as life goes on I feel as if one of the big temptations of it were to rest content with negative ease and freedom from worry, and to forget that that's only the body of happiness and not the soul. Looking into the fluffy white heart of an oleander, the other day, a kind of rapture at its uselessness came over me, at the divine heedlessness of anything but glory and beauty at the making of it.

Self-sacrifice is the noblest thing in the world, but to sacrifice other people even for the very noblest things is as wrong as persecution.

I was thinking of Mat Arnold's *Buried Life* only the other day. It has the beautiful strangeness, still more the beautiful familiarity of the truth of art to the truth of life. The greatest artist could not understand it if he had never *lived* it. It would have been double-Dutch to Goethe. Therein you and I have the advantage. What a funny thought! Hush!

Two or three times I have had that awful overwhelming horror of death; but it has always passed, and though I daresay it may come again, I don't mind so much now because I think it has more to do with the body than with the mind, and is not a reasonable thing.

As you say so beautifully about our life, so it is with that part of it which we call death, 'we are in God's hands.' There *must* be something dreadful in the thought of the change. Our Lord felt that more even than many men and women do—but I cannot think the change itself, when it comes, will be dreadful. There are so many worlds to see—all the stars. And more and more, as they search space, they find there is not such a thing anywhere, no emptiness, only more stars, more worlds. And don't you sometimes have the feeling that we could see much better if we did not have to look through eyes, if we were all sight? . . . I used to feel as if we could never know each other again and must get lost and be, as you say, 'different,' but as I grow older, it seems that love is to the soul what life is to the body, and if there's any meaning at all in the soul's life it must mean that life never ends. I don't know. We are all in the dark about it. But Hope is Hope none the less because she is blindfold. Only when some one dies, all *thoughts* are swept away and all reasons, and feeling is left alone; and we can only feel desolation and—God.

We read William James . . . I cannot make out the subconscious self. For three-fourths of a big volume he proves in the most conclusive way that it's a fool, and then he seems to say it's—God. V. says this is very helpful—just as wonderful as Evolution and sure to be the Science of to-morrow. If so, I am very glad I live to-day.

It comes to me that what we seem to need we are not

given. Joy cannot be born of necessity. There is need of patience and need of peace, but no cry of need will bring joy.

I lay for some time letting the sky wake me. From the bed you see nothing but sky. It was not 'the body of heaven' in his fulness, it was a thin wash of faint, almost transparent blue. I began to think how tremendous it would be to go out on a morning like that and stand alone with God, conscious that the earth-life would never rush in dividingly. Savonarola was in my mind—and that bit of Johannes Agricola. 'For I intend to get to God. For 'tis to God I speed so fast.' All that I felt passed into one deep human longing, I don't know how or why, except that below the surface all feeling seems to be one. There came those words, 'We never know what God is till we have given up something for him.' I have given up nothing and don't feel called to, and am as happy as can be.

UNPUBLISHED POEMS

UNPUBLISHED POEMS

LINES

Stay with me, happy Day!
Fly not away!
Dost thou think, when thou art fled,
I shall but love thee better, being dead?
Not so, not so!
To-morrow I shall say,
'Twas long ago!—
He lies, for ever shorn of rainbow wings,
Among forgotten things.'

GRIEF AND DEATH

Deep joy was mine, I owned a fountain fair
That watered with its soft refreshing dew
The plants and flowers that in my garden grew
And made them spring and bud and blossom there

And boasting of the world without, I spake,
'Come sit within my honeysuckle bowers,
And breathe the sweet scent of my lily flowers,
And listen to the song the waters make.'

Strong grief was mine, I gat me forth alone,
Into my garden dry and bare I stept,
And laid me down upon the grass and wept.
No ear, divine or human, heard my moan,
For joy bids welcome all the guests that come,
But sorrow hath no voice—Despair is dumb.

TO ONE WHO WAS NURSING A BLIND FATHER

The other day
I thought and thought and ever thought again,
How, while I sat in joy, apart from men,
In perfect joy of sun and sea and air,
You sat within the reach of nothing fair,
In darkness with the darkened. Then and there
Intolerable pity broke in prayer
Hushed by a whisper those wild words above:
'How dar'st thou pity whom I greatly love.'

TO ——

Dear, you are on the road to fame,
And I, upon no road at all;
But wander where men's voices call,
This way and that; no two the same.
And thou wilt make thyself a name
To captivate and to enthrall.
And when the dusky years shall fall,
To live in characters of flame.
Yet to one goal our footsteps tend,
Though diversely they wander here,
Where we begin will be our end,
And I, the nameless, do not fear
That thou wilt e'er forget, my friend,
How once we called each other Dear.

TO AN OLD FRIEND

Now when the sweet sunny weather
Quickens all that once was dead
I remember how we two,
You and I, I and you,
Wandered about the streets together,
Reading the books that had to be read,
Saying the things that cannot be said.

The world was young, and we were younger
In those bright forgotten days,
I remember how we two,
You and I, I and you,
Read and read for the spirit's hunger,
Walked in the old familiar ways,
Talked and talked for each other's praise.

The world is young, but we are older,
Many a book we shall read no more—
I remember how we two,
You and I, I and you,
Vowed that love should not grow colder,
That we would love as we loved before,
And the years should make us love the more.

TO TIME THE COMFORTER

Dumb Comforter of woes!
The depths of whose deep comfort no one knows;
Whose consolations on the spirit steal
More gently than Love's gentlest word; and heal
Where Love falls back affrighted; only life
Proves Thee the Comforter of mortal strife,
Of all that doth begin and end—that He
May speak in thy dread silence endlessly!

APPENDIX

NOTES OF THE TABLE TALK OF WILLIAM CORY

AT SOME GREEK CLASSES WHICH HE GAVE FOR

MARY COLERIDGE AND OTHERS

Those who knew William Cory, the poet who gave us *Ionica*, the historian who wrote *The Outlines of English History*, still more, the inspired teacher, the erratic scholar of genius, may in these notes of his talk get again some likeness of the man they knew. They will recall his posture, as with a kind of fierce but timid abruptness, he uttered the words here recorded, sitting deep in his arm-chair, his head, so like that of Cicero, bent forward, his hand over his eyes—a habit of his due as much to shyness as to short sight—until, warmed by his subject, he would suddenly raise them and an unforgettable flash of intellect electrified and enlightened his companions.

Such notes as these are bound to be disjointed, partly because so much which they recount concerned the lesson and what arose from it—more than this, because of William Cory's miraculous power of teaching twenty things at once which seemed to have nothing to do with the subject on hand. So that you were in the midst of the French Revolution or the law about English Juries, when you thought you were learning the First Aorist or mastering some dates in Greek history. And this quickness of his never left you bewildered; indeed it made you clearer than before, a result helped by his rich gift for illustration, for analogy. His own comparison of the Greek tongue to a plant with tendrils growing one from the other well describes his way of teaching, and the fashion in which his ideas and images sprang spontaneously each from each, making a unity out of many things. Mary Coleridge wrote down his words as she caught them, at the Greek classes that he held for her and three or four others, and she often caught them brokenly, without the links that bound one topic to the next. To preserve the living freshness of her account, I have added no explanatory comments excepting where the connection between passages seemed absent. And this Prefatory Note is only written for the sake of such as have never seen him, and so have no memory of his person to lend force to their impression of his talk.

Editor.

NOTES OF THE TABLE TALK OF WILLIAM CORY

Feb. 3rd, 1886.—Snowing hard, when E—— and I got to the Swiss Cottage, so we took a hansom, saying, or trying to say, the verb χράω as we went along.

'τί χρῆμα; what *is* the creature doing?' said E—— dreamily, in sore anxiety of mind as to whither the man, who did not know his way, would drive us next. It sounded like a new kind of interjection.

Mr. Cory opened the door; he was surprised to see us —offered us brandy, hot water, etc.

'What have you given him? The fare's 2s. Settled by regulation. (An extra 6d. bestowed.) Remember, that's for your horse.'

The lesson was on Xenophon's *Memorabilia*, Lib. I., cap. 1.

πληθούσης ἀγορᾶς, when the market-place was full, *i.e.*, at *noon*, rather at 9 A.M. A friend of mine from Japan told me that they have no market or place, or public, open-air place of meeting and discussion there at all. The Japanese are tame. They were well tamed 250 years ago. When I was at Corfù, I used to see the people there, men and women, as they went to their work in the morning, gathering together and talking, just as they did at Athens.

κόσμος: 1st meaning (as of *mundus*) *Order*.

ἀνάγκαις—forces in plural ('violences' in *Balin and Balan*). Xenophon means to express that Socrates did not get into a scrape with the people of Athens by contradicting the popular belief that each particular thing had been created by a special god at the beginning. 'Who did get into a scrape?'

Blank silence.

'Diagoras. A most interesting man. You'll find all about him in Grote. (Grote was a splendid fellow himself; loved the truth.) Once, when he was out at sea, a storm came on, and the sailors wanted to throw him overboard—make a Jonah of him—saying that the storm had been sent because he was an atheist. He pointed to all the other ships that were tossing about on the waves, and asked them if they thought that all those had atheists on board them.'

[*À propos* of people not being able to make winds and waters, however much they knew.] It is not true that knowledge of how a thing is made is useless unless you know how to make it; but in some cases the double knowledge is ours. We can now make ultramarine instead of having to cut up lapis lazuli for it.

ἐπιψηφίσαι, put it to the vote. The reason you ladies have no votes is that you can't fight. There's your friend, the cabman; I'm afraid he'll be your enemy by the time you've done.

The gods know everything always. If Socrates really believed this, there was no particular force in it, because it was universal. The very essence of belief in divine communication is, that it should happen at some times and not at others.

καλὸς κἀγαθός means *a perfect gentleman*—everything that one would wish one's son to be.

Religion can only be taught by the example of a life, not by texts nor precepts. Empedocles was a great teacher. Matthew Arnold worked him up into a poem.

E—— said she had read it.

I am gratified to hear it. Very few people have. When it first came out it fell so flat that this ill success of his second work quite damped Mr. Arnold's genial courage. I met him afterwards, and he was pleased to hear that a few people at Cambridge had liked it. Abélard was another great teacher.

Many great teachers are mythical, you know. Luther is not, but then he does not appear quite so amiable. Socrates wonders that any one possessing virtue should take money for teaching.

χάριν εἰδέναι is the common expression for to be grateful. There is no proper equivalent for our *ingratitude*; *ἀγνωμοσύνη* is not the same thing. There's a little touch of vulgarity in the thought of any reward at all. Modern times have gone further. There was a person called S. T. Coleridge, who lived at Highgate, who wrote some lines about giving out light like the sun, whether it is absorbed or reflected.

Unless the cultivation of virtue be corruption is not very brilliant wit on Xenophon's part. Homely worsted stocking compared with the shot silk of Plato.

We use few Perfects except the word *ought*. Such words are only curiosities in English, but practical things in Greek. There is frightful over-substantiving in English. If you look at an account of a meeting in a newspaper, and the resolutions passed, almost all the verbs seem to have disappeared.

There was a rotten and superstitious way of learning

by heart the Greek verbs that govern the genitive. A man called Coleridge,[1] a great teacher, was horrified to find I didn't know it. All those things are far better learnt by observation. Attic is the clipping of the Ionic.

διατρίβω is rub away, spend time, live—then *essay*, from the idea of rubbing away time while writing.

διαθρυπτόμενος one of the most amusing words we have—To break in pieces, break down, pat with the hand, enervate. Tryphena and Tryphosa.

[Here came the 'conclusion applied to the case of Critias and Alcibiades.']

Alcibiades was a smart young gentleman, nephew of Pericles, a beautiful person. The Athenians had that respect for blood which is innate in man. We like the historical nephews of famous historical uncles. There is Mr. Trevelyan in our own day—not that we care much for that. Alcibiades went with his pet quail to pay a large contribution for some national purpose; he belonged to a rich family. All the Athenians applauded. The quail flew away. Every one who was there rushed to try and catch it for him.

E——. 'And did they catch it?'

'Some one had that honour.'

I said I thought it strange that Xenophon should say of Critias and Alcibiades that, being young, they were probably *most ungrateful.*

'Yes, it 's a curious word. If you don't get gratitude then, you won't get it afterwards.'

[Our gratitude, being young, was constantly too much for us. Payment, when it was proposed by our elders, had been shortly and sternly refused. At the very first

[1] Edward Coleridge, tutor at Eton College.

lesson Mr. Cory took occasion to exemplify some rule of grammar by this sentence: 'I love to teach without being paid for it.'

We used to bring a bunch of flowers for Mrs. Cory sometimes. I took irises, knowing that he was very fond of them. I never see them now without thinking of him. The cyclamen was another favourite. He had a gold brooch made for 'Madam' in the form of one, but it looked heavy.

The repetition of a number of words of the same kind bored him, and he would cut short our translation by saying: 'The band as before!' in imitation of the Vicar who declined to read 'the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut,' etc., in *Daniel* over and over again.]

. . . "The Scotch used to be the great people for style. I learnt about it first from Blair's *Lectures*. Nowadays it's supposed to come of itself—to be a gift—and so it is—with a few people.

There are different ways of saying Yes—*φημὶ πάνυ μὲν οὖν*, etc. The Romans got on without it. In modern Greek it is *μάλιστα*, a very heavy word. Is the German Na used for No? I have just been reading the life of a man who said he could not enter the German Army because all soldiers had to be confirmed, and when he was asked if he believed the Faith, he could not say Ja, as he did not believe a word of the preparation, 'Say Na!' said the Minister who had prepared him. And the Na passed unnoticed among the crowd of Jas! You must emancipate yourselves from the word *become*, when you translate [?]. You cannot say of soldiers fighting: They became brave men; it must be 'proved themselves.'

. . . The Greeks had an office for seeing to the respectability of foreigners; a proper citizen became responsible

for every one. Modern nations would do well to imitate this—especially the Swiss.

Xenophon was himself a renegade, a traitor; but some people are very hard upon him. He was disgusted with the Athenians for their treatment of Socrates. He had his son brought up in Sparta. Demosthenes was a political saint and consistent to the last. Xenophon was not. Theognis lived at Megara, near Athens. He was a vehement Tory—hated Democrats. The early politics of Greece are woven into his poems and those of Solon.

ἀδόκιμος is disapproved of—'castaway' in the Bible, where it should be translated *unqualified*; the image is taken from citizenship—shows St. Paul's knowledge of politics.

The Roman word for τύραννος is *Dictator*. When a Dictator prolonged his power indefinitely, like Julius Caesar, he was said to be Rex—a term of horror. The whole doctrine of Constitutional Government is: *You must show cause*—either before or after what is done for the nation. Sometimes, of course, you have to do the thing first and ask leave afterwards. The Greeks had graduated taxation, about which people fuss so now, and they don't seem to have minded it."

[Before the lesson ended, something turned his mind to Henry Bradshaw (Fellow of King's), Cambridge, and the friend of William Cory as of so many others.—Ed.]

. . . "Hospitality was innate in him. He never had to learn it as other people have. He gave as an open stream gives its water to every one that comes, because he could not help it."

March 24—*May* 19, 1886

PLATO'S 'APOLOGY'

"Such easy, trickling talk! In Plato it is all talk and not artificial speech. This is his art. Few men can make a long period grammatically; others are carried away by their grammar to say things they never meant to. A friend of mine once said to me: 'Plato is like a vegetable.' The sentences grow; they are like delightful things with tendrils. The position of the words is the delightful thing; the constant surprises. The man you have got in the first few lines is already remarkable. Socrates is not a humorist—not a wit—he delights in playing. He was no martyr; there was no touch of inspiration in his simple resolve to stay at his post. It was just obedience to law. I know no man so interesting to the imagination who did so little attitudinising. There are plain acts and transcendental. The captain who refused to give up the keys of his magazine to the mutineers and tossed them into the sea was not courting death. He merely stuck to law and didn't care. The man who saved a lieutenant from being hung off Spithead, by putting his own head into the noose, acted transcendentally. Both were heroes.

The germ of an Established Church is in the demand of Socrates to be maintained as a public preacher. If he had conducted a Dialogue with them in his own way, they would have talked perhaps for an hour and a half, and then only arrived at one point. . . .

The time allowed for speaking was measured by a water clock. Rather hard when a man was speaking for his life! It is very curious to think that he had to speak to 500 people.

ὁ πᾶς χρόνος (*the whole of time*), the right expression for *eternity*. If there is a ridiculous thing in modern talk it is the distinction between time and eternity.

If we were disposed to be very hard on Socrates, we might say it was a pity, when he spoke of those whom he hoped to meet in the other world, that he mentioned people like Palamedes and Ajax, whose injuries he wished to compare with his own, instead of those who were really worth knowing; but here we get a really characteristic bit.

ἀνεξέταστος βίος, *life—uncriticised*—by oneself as well as others. There is nothing more central and cardinal than this in all the writings of Plato. Self-knowledge is got by talking to others; certain people whom one happens to know once or twice in one's life serve as a kind of touchstone. Happiness consists in right thinking.

Socrates is τὰ μετέωρα φροντιστής, *a transcendental speculator*—what Aristophanes called 'an air-treader,' and Napoleon '*idéologue*'—a *doctrinaire* in politics. 'None of your metaphysicians!' George III. said. In *The Clouds* the two λόγοι, the better and the worse, are personified. Aristophanes represents the common sense of Athens. As the enemy of Socrates, he is of course our enemy. Common sense lapsed between the entry of the barbarians into Rome and the middle of the last century. It was re-discovered by Johnson—'None of your cant, Sir!'

The ancients were always striving after cosmogony. 'No, gentlemen, I assure you I have nothing to do with these things,' says Socrates. It was a waste of time. See Mill's *Logic*. Nearly two hundred years after—time of the second Punic War—came Archimedes. One

hundred and sixty years after, Lucretius, contemporary of Julius Caesar. Seventy-three years after, Pliny, with his Encyclopædia. The Schoolmen, puzzling themselves over such questions as 'How many angels could dance on the point of a needle?' were their legitimate successors—as it were, grinding at a mill, with nothing but wind in it. But there is no doubt they exercised their minds in this way as schoolboys exercise theirs with Euclid.

The worth of literature depends on the power of a book to exalt the character of an individual or a nation. Scott did this. Literature is not worth much at present.

Bolingbroke, Robertson, Hume (who envied Robertson) and Gibbon (who envied both) were masters of English style.

The French talk in crystals and write in crystals. The Greeks sometimes did and generally did not. The Latins cling to a rule till it becomes almost monotonous; the Greeks have no sooner made one than they delight in breaking it and kicking up their heels. Some of the Greek words are transparent. It is like chemistry—you can see the idea forming. Some of them catch hold of one's mind like creeping plants.

The Greeks at one time hated the sound of *ns*; such a word as κῆνσος (census) in the New Testament would have been a monster to them. τιθείς is an escape from τιθένς. We are most unfortunate in the words *relation*, *connection in-law*. I wish they could be changed; but not even Gladstone can do that. Fancy having to call your sister-in-law a relation! The Latins were happier with their *consanguineus* and *affinis*. ὦ is the sign of the vocative. The Greeks never meant us to groan over

O! as the Latins did. The participle is like ivy—it must grow over a trunk. If we can't find the trunk, we must imagine it."

[When we went wrong, our master would say: 'I'm afraid you must sit in sackcloth and ashes for that!' When we were right, he would say, as if he were pleased: 'You've been taught,' or 'it does you credit!' very rarely: 'If you can make out that for yourself, you needn't come up to Hampstead.' Then we were very happy when we went down the hill to the station, however cold it might be. And the next week we would be there on the stroke of the clock.—'What feverish punctuality!' M——, who came all the way from Eton, occasionally took a hansom, but she always dismissed it a few doors off, for fear there should be comments on the luxuriousness of the habit. The first thing that we saw on entering the hall was a water-colour sketch of the Piraeus. Terrible accounts of fires, cut out from the newspapers, were stuck up all about, as a warning to the servants not to be careless. The dining-room was used as a study. As Spring came on, a budding elm-tree outside made it pleasant; and there was always a bird in a cage, and sometimes a blue kitten, who distracted our minds. I do not know that Mr. Cory was so fond of the kitten, but he was very fond of the bird. 'He's happy. He does not know that he will die.']

. . . "The Imperative is the root of all verbs. A baby uses first an Interjection, then an Imperative. Its 'Da' always means 'give it to me.' Reduplication is simply stuttering. It is most evident in the Imperative because that is the most impatient mood. The secret of conversation is the comparison of notes and not strife. It is waste of time to finish our sentences; we should suggest

by them, as when we quote, or say the first words of a Psalm. We make too many bow-wow speeches.

εἰρωνεία — originally *the dissembling of one's own powers.*

λατρεία is the higher form of θρησκεία, that 'pure *religion* and undefiled' of which St. James speaks. Some object to the use of θρησκεία in that verse; others like it. How great must the Christian religion be, if the mere θρησκεία, the outward and visible sign of the λατρεία, is this!

The *Theaetetus* always seems to me the great example of the clumsiness of your true hero-worshipper—the donkey playing at being a lap-dog, eh?—what Jesse Collings is to Chamberlain. Two of Socrates' dearest friends—Simmias and Cebes—were Thebans. Interesting, because they must have overcome their national hatred to learn of him. The Spartans fought the Athenians like gentlemen, but the Thebans fought them like wild beasts. There was a pretty poem by Edwin Arnold about a young man of Megara. I made it into an exercise."

[Later on, Mr. Cory gave it to me. Here it is, just as he tore it out. But it was far more beautiful as he told it, his voice breaking.]

EXERCISE LXXXV

Juvenis Megarensis

There was near Athens a town called Megara. The nearer they are the more do cities quarrel. The enmity between the Athenians and Megarians was for some years so great that, if any Megarian came across the frontier, he was put to death by the Athenians.

A few days after the war between these cities began,

Socrates was sitting at night on the bank of the Ilissus, near the plane which used to give him shade by day. Hearing a noise he raised his head, breaking off his meditation. Then he saw a lad stretched before his feet, panting. He recognised a pupil called Apodemus of Megara. The lad said, 'Oh, master, be quick; converse with me; tell me what you did not plainly tell when you talked with the others. The watchmen of your people are pursuing me; the laws of your people condemn me to death for daring to come hither. Teach me what you know about the soul of man.'

Then did the master clear up that which he had left doubtful about the second life.

The moon broke through the clouds, and when the light was shed on the bank, Socrates saw Apodemus pressing his side with his hand, and blood flowing through his fingers. The watchmen came up too late.

[There followed a tamer tale of enthusiasm for knowledge.—Ed.]

. . . "A pretty little bit of English History—how the peasants near Cambridge turned out to resist the building of an anatomical Museum and Whewell sallied forth against them at the head of the Undergraduates.

Banishment is not known to English law. Lord Durham was told he had made a great mistake, because he banished a man from Canada to Bermuda.

The precedent for Socrates' case is that of Diagoras, the Melian, who suffered as a στηλίτης.[1] He is supposed to have been a very innocent person, by no means an atheist. They were mistaken in their heat.

We have three investigations in England—before the Magistrate, the Grand Jury and the Petty Jury. All

[1] *i.e.* posted as infamous.

that is more important in politics than in criminal matters, because people get excited over politics and condemn straight off. See S. T. Coleridge's *Piccolomini*. The Athenians, with their great and beautiful freedom, did not always wait to wash a thought in many waters—in other words, to read the bill twice—before they voted. They voted too quickly, but in the great historic instance, when, in a fit of anger, they had voted a general massacre of the people of Mitylene, they changed their minds and repented. There is nothing in Grecian History like the history of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. I do not know whether you will agree with me, but I think the thirty tyrants were worse than Robespierre and the Terrorists, for they were *not* afraid of each other and they had the Spartans to back them up. They had been brutalized by the long war. The early plays of Aristophanes (*The Acharnians, etc.*) are gay and mirthful, but we can trace in their increasing bitterness the hardening of heart of the people. The last three—with female names—are scarcely read now. In *The Acharnians* he glorified his δῆμος, his *parish*, as Sophocles glorified his in the *Oedipus Coloneus*. A man cared more about his δῆμος than his φυλή or *tribe*. There were about one hundred and sixty (Smith says one hundred and ninety) δῆμοι. There were originally ten tribes, but two more were added after the Macedonian Conquest, when the population increased to 500,000—which is still under that of an English county.

Democracy is abolition of privilege, equality of citizens. It is opposed to Oligarchy, *not* to Aristocracy, which may perfectly co-exist with it. Pericles was picked out for thirty years by the will of the people. 'Justum ac tenacem, etc.' This was quoted by John de Witt upon

the rack; it is therefore sacred to all politicians. Grote was the first man who explained constitutional morality. Young men used to be sent to Edinburgh, to Dugald Stewart, for wisdom; he taught political economy and regenerated it.

There is a contrast between The Maccabees and the last struggle of Greek heroism. The courage which is at its last gasp is always tremendous. There was a legend that the Athenians were seated in the theatre when the news of Syracuse arrived. Strangers were present. They had all lost sons, brothers, and friends in the defeat, but sooner than betray their grief they sat the whole play out, letting the fox gnaw them. If true, it beats the Spartans. A grand thing—the national pride!"

May 26—*June* 16, 1886

Crito

[On May 26, E. S., M. C., and I began the *Crito*. Mrs. Cory—'Madam' as she was always called to us—was giving some one a lesson in needlework in the next room. We talked about the Athenian maidens, the ἐργαστῖναι, the way they spent their time weaving the πέπλος of Athene for the festival of Παναθήναια—some standing at their looms, some telling stories to the rest.]

. . . "There was one of them—a delightful girl—her epitaph says: '*She was a delightful companion at wool-work, and always chattering.*'

The very beginning of the *Crito*—'Is it not yet early?'—is a stroke of art; it shows us that Socrates was not agitated, that he slept perfectly well. It was Ὄρθρος

βαθύς when Crito came to the prison, *deep dawn*—literally *deep twilight*—the beautiful time when the birds are singing and the sky is not yet clear. Word-mongering boys were misled by the classics to credit the hen-birds with song, because in Latin they were *philomela* and *alauda*, etc. I was prohibited by my sight from being a close observer of Nature.

'To-morrow, Socrates, you must end your life,' says Crito. That he needn't have said; I think it shows a little want of taste. The Italians, I believe, are famous for avoiding any allusion to the ugly event.

Morning dreams have a certain horrible reality, because we wake directly after. Cicero refers to this in his *Essay on Divination*.

In the *Crito* the arrangement of sentences is not merely grammatical, but musical. Lysias—Plato's contemporary—has none of that life, sparkle, rattle. Greek prose generally is disappointing. Except Herodotus, no prose author, after Plato, gives me much pleasure. Demosthenes does now and then—but more from the downright character of the man himself which shines through. After him, Thucydides.

There are numbers of Greek words beginning with συν. If you try to write English, you are haunted by words beginning with *con*.

The Greeks expect you to be on your mettle when you read their books: ὀρφανία is *the story of an orphan*.[1] One of the few discoveries I have made in the course of my long and weary life is, that it does *not* mean *orphanhood*. φλυαρία—a kind of plausible intellectual humbug, talked not by a stupid but by a silly man.

[1] He seems to be alluding to Plat. *Crit.*, 45 D.

The Greeks looked on *Very middling*! (μετριώτατα) as a good expression; we think it a bad one. . . .

Philosophers must have new words, but if there were not absolute anarchy in this country, they would submit them to a scholar—keep out of the vile Greek words at which the Greeks would have shuddered. Their language is a perfect magazine. The Romans went to it just as we do. In the days of Diocletian—about 310—they delighted in Greek terms.

Greeks and Romans were particularly fond of such expressions as *walking through* a thing, when they meant narration. *Discourse* is *running to and fro*. . . .

Going to the Olympian Games would be a θεωρία, some religion in it, but chiefly fun and curiosity. Horace tells you about the Corybantes; all his cooked-up enthusiasm does not move the reader in the least. The Athenians would not often have such spectacles. They were too licentious. Cybele's was a rowdy religion. Athene's was the respectable one.

The Roman rulers had a horror of these things. People who joined in such worship were severely punished. There was an attempt to stop it in the second Punic War. All this explains the persecution of the Christians, not by a Nero but by such a man as Marcus Aurelius—a conscientious man—a reader of Plato. They thought Christianity would destroy family life and all the *disciplina Romana*. Pliny—about eighty years after Christ and seventy before Marcus Aurelius—said the Christians were good, orderly people, but their worship was conducted at night, and this drew suspicion upon them.

'Why do you care so much about the world's opinion?' Socrates says to Crito. 'You must weigh people, not number them.'

They do not talk as we do of *honour* and *conscience*. Αἰδώς is the word expressing the great Greek quality which is the foundation of honour; and the other thing which restrains you (*e.g.* keeps you from throwing a stone too hard lest it rebound on you) is Nemesis, *retribution*. They are not exactly moral ideas, but sentiments of the mind, from which moral ideas arise. Read Mallock's beautiful translation of the chorus from the *Hippolytus* in *The New Republic*.

What we look upon as the most absolute law of all, the Greeks looked upon as anarchy. Tyranny was to them a human earthquake. This feeling was revived in France. Amyot's Plutarch—Clement Marot's Psalms—were the rage. Philippe de la Noue was that sort of character. Cardinal de Retz said that our Montrose was like one of Plutarch's heroes. Catherine of Russia is absolute power tempered by assassination and epigrams.

'You deliberately stuck to Athens as a limpet sticks to a rock,' Socrates says to himself. It's very amusing that he should be chaffing himself here about his stay-at-home ways—just at the end of his life, too. There is a jolly Greek proverb: Δειλὴ ἐνὶ πυθμένι φειδώ—*it's a poor thing to spare the dregs of a cask*. This is Tennyson's *Ulysses*. That 's one of the poems that do affect character—not like those of the confectionery school. Socrates might have argued too that it would be wretched for his disciples to see him dependent on casual kindness and stripped of all his dignity. Dying, he left them an honoured name. He could not have escaped."

June 16—*July* 28 *and October* 6—*December* 22, 1886

PHAEDO

"Phaedo says of those who were with Socrates on this last day of his life, that they sometimes laughed, sometimes wept.

It seems strange that they should have laughed. Laughing at a man and laughing with him are very different actions. The laugh of sympathy and enjoyment is a moral thing; it saves men from going mad. English men laugh more than Greek; if two or three of them are together and they do not, it's a sure sign that something is wrong. Women are not like this; Homer says of one that she laughed with tears in her eyes. A hard laugh is very horrible. It was one of the things that troubled me most at Eton, to hear the boys laughing in that way. . .

Later on, the word ἐπιγελάσας is used of Cebes. It may mean *smile*. I'm inclined to think this gentleman didn't laugh. I'd rather he didn't. A laugh would have been rather a discord, unless it was a very low, soft ripple.

Xanthippe beat her breast for sorrow. What made people do that? They say a child will beat a chair against which it has hurt itself. I don't know. I never saw it. Animals don't do that kind of thing. I once tried to get a dog out of a trap that had hurt it, and it bit my hand. There is a new theory that burnt moths do not suffer. It's more like the devil than anything that I know—the botheration of a possessed moth.

It is amusing that Socrates should have had the child brought to him in prison—and he doesn't seem to have had much feeling for it.

He is one of those rare people who enjoy youth for its own sake, its freshness and flexibility, not for the sake of its flattery. We have nothing like it. Dr. Johnson and S. T. Coleridge were poor copies. Bennet Langton flattered, and none of the young men who came up to Highgate talked much themselves. . .

πᾶσα ψυχὴ ἀθάνατος—All soul is indestructible, says Phaedrus. Plato would not have denied the immortality of animals and plants. It is impossible to mark off man from the rest. There is no break anywhere, though there may be, and are, gaps in the record. The power of motion, as a test for distinguishing animals from vegetables, has been proved useless. The sum of spirit is constant; that the sum of matter was constant had been proved before Plato. *Pre-existence—learning is recollection*—it's the prettiest fantastic notion, but he doesn't make much of it. We say 'Self-evident,' where he says all this. When a child says to you, 'Silly—to tell me that,' it is self-evident to him that two and two make four; but it is extremely difficult to see how and when the knowledge comes. I suppose no one ever watched a child more closely than I did my little man for the first three years of his life, yet I could not find out when these things began to dawn upon him. Questioning must be fair, of course—*Πλατωνικῶς* not *βωμολόχως*.

As Olympiodorus says, You must not try to catch your victim out, like the interrogator of that unfortunate man who, when asked whether he did not admit that two and two make four, at length replied in desperation, 'Not till I know what you are going to infer from it.'

Diagrams were originally things that were drawn across on a table of sand. The inconvenience of it was that you could not take the sand-table with you. 'I will bring you this man from the dust and the little stick,' says Cicero. *A pulvere* is not *from the dead*, as one would imagine, but from *the sand-table*, and the *little stick* was the stick with which diagrams were drawn. *This man* is Archimedes, whose tomb Cicero discovered and identified by means of the figures of a sphere and cylinder[1] on it—an antiquarian find which greatly delighted him. Archimedes lived two hundred years after Socrates, in the sunset of the Athenian glory.

Aristotle, the grandson of Socrates, by intellect, was taught by Plato, and taught Alexander. Demosthenes was the last Greek who enjoyed freedom. Rome overthrew the brutes of Macedonians, but in the end she had to overthrow Greece herself. Seventy years after the death of Archimedes, Aemilius, the second Africanus, quoted Homer at the fall of Carthage. But Rome treated Greece as a man treats a lady, and 'Conquered Greece conquered Rome,' says Horace. . . . Antisthenes was the original founder of the Stoics. Whatever earnestness there was in him survived in them. They influenced the Roman character and law. Wonderful—so strong a people receiving so much from those they overcame! The Greeks admired the Romans too. The Epicureans lay alongside the Stoics. Wherever Calvinism has been, there the country has strengthened. The Greek Stoic books have all perished, happily for us. Epicurus was the favourite philosopher of gentlemen . . . Athens has the full credit of being the mother of the Stoics. They were the Church—the Franciscans, so to speak—the

[1] Cic. *Tusc.* 23 and 64.

solid result of Platonism. Their central notion was Virtue, not the immortality of the Soul, etc. The Στοὰ Ποικίλη (*painted Loggia*—not Porch) was their place of meeting, where they walked up and down talking, as we did in the cloisters at Cambridge when it rained. Zeno studied Socrates from the books which his father brought him back, when he went to trade with Athens. Zeno and Sphoerus connect Socrates with Cleomenes, 240 B.C. else you can't account for the Spartan getting those high notions. Cleomenes, and his brother, Agis, were something like the Gracchi at Rome, 120 B.C. Agis persuaded the people to restore the Spartan monarchy, to throw off the authority of the Ephors. It was like the restoration of the Mikado in Japan. He appealed to the good old mythical laws of Lycurgus—which probably never existed—as, in after times, Englishmen appealed to the Witan—to the law of Edward the Confessor—to the Parliament of Simon de Montfort. Agis was a George—a Socialist—a retrograding transcendentalist like the Emperor Julian and the late King of Prussia (the brother of the present man). Levelling up was his plan. All ardent reformers are on the edge of anarchy at any time. They wish the world to be free—yet their plans could only be carried out by our giving up our freedom. He was hanged with his mother and his grandmother. (Women were great at Sparta; they had immense property.) It reminds one of the old saying: 'The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church.'

Pythagoras and his disciples anticipated Christ; they were persecuted after Pythagoras's death. Marcus Aurelius (whose real name was Antoninus) was the latest of the Stoics—'the last Rose of summer.' He gives thanks for his teachers—most of all for his mother,

who was a religious woman. His son, Commodus, was a wretch, and the worst of it was, the poor father knew it, and had the strength of mind to disinherit him. But he thought a bad successor would be better than a disputed succession. He had the honour of causing the death of some of the sweetest people who ever lived —the Lyons Martyrs, Blandina, etc. The link in the catena connecting him with the Stoics is Epictetus, whose book—dry reading now—influenced him more than anything else.

The 'spiritual man' of St. Paul is Plato's philosopher. Unworldliness is philosophy.

The Greeks did not get beyond Panhellenic patriotism. 'Our glory is that we have spent more money for all the Greeks put together than any State ever spent for itself.' What Demosthenes means by 'glory' is the keeping off of the barbarians on behalf of all the Greeks. Lucretius says the right thing is to pity every one who is weak. That's the outside of what you can get one hundred years before Lucan. . .

Epicurus, too, was a good soul; invented pleasure gardens—not gin, nor brandy, nor anything of that kind.

Chillingworth, the Cudworth School, tried to revive Platonism in their lives, but I won't undertake to say they were of the slightest importance. Any one who did so now would be a tepid prig. Darwin and Faraday were the two philosophers of my day; Clerk Maxwell was too odd.

Malesherbes, the advocate of Louis XVI., is described as 'fearing nothing—hoping nothing—interested in everything that is good.' Nor was he without imagination. After the trial, he found the king very mournful.

THE KING.—"What am I to do for those poor clerks who laboured so hard for me? I have nothing wherewith to reward them."

MALESHERBES.—"*Embrassez-les!*"

If you want to find something that looks like an anticipation of modern thought—Keats, Shelley, Coleridge, etc.—read the *Phaedrus*. You can't talk of the soul and the body as if they were flour and sugar; all this is impossible to the modern mind. When a man like Mr. Shorthouse brings out Platonism again, as if it could still be taught, it's an anachronism. Plato's *soul* is a sort of person—a captive woman.

The Fathers of the Early Church delighted in such passages of the *Phaedo* as get near the Manichaean doctrine of the evil of matter—*Manes*; asceticism; the people who didn't wash and stood on pillars.

Note the difference between Plato and Wordsworth in the great Ode. One says that all our life we are recovering the ideas we lost at our birth; one, that all our life we are losing them.

Faraday's *forces* would have delighted Plato; they seem to be something like his *ideas*.

Such is the power of rhetoric over the mind, and such the charm of language, that men cannot free themselves from metaphors. Doctors *will* speak of 'Nature.' Cebes' doctrine runs on all fours with the modern doctrine of the conservation of forces. We say *force* where we used to say *matter*. This is the raft on which we are floating now; it may upset, of course.

The other Dialogues are full of the eristic Sophists, etc., with whom Socrates had contended all his life. One charm of the *Phaedo* is, that there's so little hostility in it. He just refers to them, but very tenderly.

Except now and then in a dream, thinking is not possible for any length of time without words. 'His intellect is in a state of purity,' says Plato—and the word means literally, *tested by the sun.* The Greeks had a fantastic notion that the sun exposed everything, which we should call a fallacy of observation. The sun does not show the purity of a thing—it corrupts it. Deianeira found out the poisoned shirt by exposing it to the sun. True chemistry is only 110 years old. It began with Cavendish, Priestley, Lavoisier. There is a quarrel between France and England as to the first discoverer of water.

γένεσις does not represent our idea of *creation* as distinct from *making*; indeed they seem to have had no word for it. Theologians would tell you that no one but Jehovah had a right to say *I am.*

It is a pitiable thing to think that the old Athenians had no glass to look through. Strange, that in Greek books there should be no reference to the stars as an image of stability! To the Greeks they were merely *décors* (Zwingli seems to have been the first person who noticed them poetically. There is not much of it even in Milton; he decorates with the Pleiades.) They glorify the *αἰθήρ*, almost worship it. The *ἀήρ* would be within Ruskin's firmament roof. There was nothing beyond. . . . Nonsense about *vaults* and 'heaven-pointing spires'; they point down. But I fancy the ancients really did look upon the sky as a sublime dish-cover. At first 'the harmony of the spheres' meant the distances between them; then, from a misunderstanding of the word 'harmony,' people thought they made a jolly noise as they went round.

It is piteous to think that Socrates wasn't up to what

the meanest child knows now about the formation of the leaf and the like. He had never seen through a microscope. What he ought to have done is this. He should have gone down on his knees and looked at a toadstool, or gone to Egypt and watched a pumpkin all day long, as he wouldn't have minded doing in his rigidity. I have no patience with a man who ties such knots as he does sometimes. Surely you may see one horse that is bigger than another and say so, without going home and making yourself unhappy about it.

Plato speaks about the mummies of Egypt. How did he come to know about them? Had he been talking to some traveller? He employs the same word that is used for pickling; *embalm* is certainly more handsome. He wrote for clever people. Wonderful, how they ever made out those old manuscripts—all written in one line. Isocrates says that Spartans may have a book, if they can find anybody to read it to them; that is the Athenian Pharisee sneering at the Lacedaemonian publican. Plato must have looked over and corrected his manuscript. Strange, that the ancients should have stopped just on the brink of the great discovery of printing, when they were so fond of seals! Perhaps they liked their writing, or thought it a good occupation for their slaves. We know exactly how books were published in Rome. Some one read aloud, and 600 slaves wrote it down. Martial's *Epigrams* were sold for sixpence a copy.

. . . Each great author is a new literary sense. People cannot conjecture what it is like, nor how big it is. Every book should be a key to reading other books. *Phaedo* has the perfection of urbanity of style, as Matthew Arnold would say. Again, there is the Greek taste

for draggle-tail—Baxter-ing—'the last words of Mr. Baxter!' Plato never finishes the sentence where we should. Perhaps it soothed the mind. Oddly enough, those who do finish where we should—Lysias and Isocrates—are the very authors who bore us most in Greek.

The arrangement of words is beautiful. Even Tennyson, who knows more about it than any one, has to italicise now and then, to give the right emphasis. . . .

It is by persisting in discovering antecedents that we shall be happy in future life—if we continue reading Plato. . . .

Infinite trouble have I taken, explaining the uses of the word *ἀν* to generations—now hoary-headed dotards, most of them, who know no Greek at all.

Having learnt a little Greek, as you have now—about twopence-halfpenny worth—you might read Chrysostom and the New Testament. Any one who takes an interest in going to church ought to."

[I think he was rather surprised to hear that we generally did read the New Testament every day. He said he had tried *Revelation* with some boys; found it impossible—too barbarous. We were warned against popular error—the Constantinople creed—vulgarly called the Nicene.]

"*Simon* means *snub-nosed.* I have sometimes thought I could trace a dislike of his own name in St. Paul's writings. Paulus Aemilius glorified it for the Romans.

κάθαρμα is *a victim slain for a justification.* At the *Θαργήλια*, or feast of Apollo and Artemis, the most worthless criminals were beaten down to the shore with fig-sticks, to show their vileness, and thrown into the sea. So, too, there were human sacrifices at Rome, though Macaulay could not believe it.

Generally, the Greeks had little idea of mental uncertainty. There is a little bit of Homer—very unlike the rest of him—about Castor and Pollux—that used to haunt me as a boy. It describes the feeling.

'This way and that dividing the swift mind,' as Tennyson says. So young Neoptolemus in the *Philoctetes* hesitates whether to behave shabbily—as Ulysses bids him—or no.

'Take to the oars when you can't manage the sails!' says Menander. We have lost him and we mourn for Menander. He produced on the Romans the same effect as France on the English in Charles II.'s time.

Plato speaks of the nightingale, the swallow, the hoopoe, as singing-birds. There were nightingales in a grove near Athens. One would not naturally select the swallow for its singing; most likely they noticed the way it twittered before it left for the winter. All the Athenians loved it, for it brought them news that the winter was over, and they could change their bread and figs for fresh green vegetables and have nettles for dinner. The boys used to go from house to house singing the Swallow Song. The hoopoe is the King of Birds in Aristophanes.

There is an aviary in the *Theaetetus*. The birds are the ideas. You have them in the cage in your possession, but you must put your hand in if you want to get hold of them.

He says the brain and the spinal marrow form the medium through which the soul acts on the body. Odd, the way memory is roused in a dream by touch!

In the *Laws* man is called 'the plaything of the gods.' Rather painful—a thing for a bitter old man to say.

. . . The association of ideas was taught by Locke (time of Charles II.)—one of those people who invented

good sense—the second great teacher of the Whigs after Hooker (time of Elizabeth). Locke was supposed to have defeated Filmer, but Filmer's ideas have come up again lately. John Morley in his *Life of Rousseau* is nearer Filmer than Locke.

. . . Be careful not to interchange words that appear to be synonymous. One of the Christian Socialists, who prided themselves on being loose thinkers, wrote a pamphlet arguing that profit was wrong, because profit and advantage were the same thing, and it was wrong to take advantage of another! I only saw Mansfield[1] once, but I could never forget it. 'Happy were those who knew him in this life—happy will those be who know him in the next!' said Kingsley.

In the *Meno*, virtue is said to come *θείᾳ μοίρᾳ*, *by a divine institution*. I thought about it for many years. Then I appealed to a philosopher, who confirmed me when I said that virtue was a question of degree. The philosophical Pharisee is bad. 'I thank God that I am not as those other politicians are.' No feeling for the poor dear people who give themselves up for the public good! I prefer Henry IV. to many Platos. There were two attempts to assassinate him after his change of religion. The first man only succeeded in wounding him on the lips. His Protestant friend, d'Aubigny, said to him, 'Sire, you have denied your God with your lips, and He has smitten you on your lips. When you deny Him with your heart, He will smite you through your heart.' Ravaillac did.

Landor wrote a Dialogue between Diogenes and Plato. I never liked Landor much. He expatriated himself; no man should do that without the strongest reason. . . .

[1] [Charles Blackford Mansfield (1819-1855).]

ἀρβύλη is a strong, clumsy boot; κόθορνος, *buskin*, fitted either foot. But the Greeks were not so particular about their boots as they were about their helmets.

Attire is a word of exquisite charm for me:

'And ye shall walk in silk attire.

[The talk here took a fresh turn. Mr. Cory digressed into poetry.—Ed.]

"You know Matthew Arnold's *Scholar Gipsy*? He'll be remembered by that—and *Thyrsis*—when all the rest are gone."

[Then before we knew where we were, he took us back to the classics.—Ed.]

"The Romans had no good word for smell; *odorari* comes only once in Horace.

An ἐπιστάτης regulates your actions, but a δεσπότης can buy and sell you. No Greek admitted a δεσπότης, no one indeed, except a slave. Happily we have kept the meaning of that word.

ἵληθι, ἵλαθι, *be kind*, is used as a farewell to the gods where χαῖρε, *be happy*, or ἔρρωσο, *be thou strong!* is used to mortals. Our *goodbye* is *God be with you!* We can't help looking ahead. Everything we say is prospective, not retrospective. It's one of the most curious laws of our nature apparently.

In Greece, if you see the sun set, you always think of Socrates. So you do, if you see a bit of green grass; but I did not; nothing but green in the distance—and that was blue.

March 3—*July*, 1887

ANTIGONE

[The lesson began with a discourse upon Iambics.—Ed.]

. . . "The French wrote Alexandrines with no caesura

as far back as the fourteenth century. Look at Bertrand du Guesclin. You should put things together which run parallel, but are not acquainted with each other—that 's the amusing thing to do in history. Books only give you things which are connected. Petrarch lived at the same time as Bertrand du Guesclin, yet there is no sense of monotony in him. The founders of the Royal Society were at work in Cromwell's lifetime. . . .

We are the children of the Romans and the grandchildren of the Greeks. Of course it is crossed in us by the influence of the Hebrew. The Greek cadences give us the keenest pleasure—almost more than our own; at least we agree more about them. I expect I should not easily find any one in London who would agree with me that the most beautiful cadences are to be found in *The Soldier's Dream*. We enjoy our *prose* more than the Greek, grand though it be. Latin prose is beautiful, but too cosmetic.

The Norman scribes spoilt our Anglo-Saxon spelling for ever—gave us an inheritance of trouble.

. . . How widely different is the French taste from our own! Yet, in the days of Edward I. and Philip the Fair, England and France were gee-ing like two horses in an omnibus. They read the same books—trash that nobody can get through now-a-days. Their lawyers were strengthening the crown in the same way, delighting to show that they were sharper than the ecclesiastics. The letters of Héloise, the nun, to Abélard are the only interesting thing in the five hundred years from Boethius to Petrarch. The only book of the Middle Ages which is still read eagerly and spontaneously is Thomas à Kempis. The works of Ubertino and others were

swallowed up by it—it was an Aaron's rod. I know that many people find interest and pleasure in Dante. I do not. I read him from a sense of duty, and feel virtuous afterwards. I have lately dragged myself through *Paradise Lost*—thought it was a good thing to do on Sunday afternoons. Very fine, but very heavy. Felt when I had done

What a good boy am I!

There were plums, of course."

[And so back to the play.—Ed.]

What a fuss at the beginning of the Watchman's speech! *All this means*, '*Enter Phylax out of breath.*' The Greeks had no stage directions, so they were obliged to put them all into the text, which led to every kind of *niaiserie.*

ἦ κατεῖχε τὸν νέκυν is the most monstrous *enjambement* I ever saw. It makes me think that Sophocles was very young at the time, and didn't revise for a second edition. There are many passages in *Antigone* that show a want of art. Sophocles was not yet master of his tools. He speaks of θέμις, decree, doom. In the old days there was no distinction between *legislation* and *judicature.* With us, judges only make law in the sense of making the minor premiss. The major premiss is—That no stealing is lawful; the judge says, 'The pickpocket has stolen, and therefore he must go to prison.'

Sophocles was chosen to lead the army on account of *Antigone.* As a boy he took part in the thanksgivings after Salamis. He acted Nausicaa—looked handsome—threw the ball so charmingly! This was in his own play. *Antigone* is very rough—yet he had written many plays before he won the prize with her. Euripides wrote an

Antigone; in his version she marries Haemon. Though there is nothing perhaps so sublime as Aeschylus, Sophocles was a far better playwright than either Aeschylus or Euripides. Ladies should be interested in Antigone and Ismene, because they are the forerunners of Minna and Brenda—of Caroline, the most delightful of all heroines, and Shirley. Antigone is an *ange farouche*; she never uses Vocatives nor speaks to Kreon by a title, as Ismene does. Ismene is an amiable creature; she suddenly plucks up her spirit, and surprises the world by running her neck into the halter. Nothing is more famous—nothing has been more fascinating to young men —than Antigone's answer to Kreon. It was so when I was young. Uncommonly good writing just there—pointed and brilliant to the last degree!

Sophocles was a contemporary of Pericles. He saw the Parthenon in its beauty—the Propylaea—the entrance. There is a little Temple still which is perfect but for one Caryatid, who is in the British Museum. When you marry the Prime Minister you can have her sent back. They have had to put up a sham one. I doubt if they would wish for the Elgin Marbles themselves; the curse of Minerva should have lighted upon Lord Elgin; they could not restore them, they could only put them into a Museum—but they ought to have the Caryatid. These figures of women bearing burdens were types of the women who sneaked and let the Persians in.

The meeting of Jocasta and Oedipus is one of the most powerful, vigorous things in any literature. In Theocritus, Tiresias is a sort of dear old country clergyman. Jocasta hanged herself: it was etiquette for ladies to do so.

Honour was understood in the days of Cavaliers and Roundheads.

> 'I could not love thee, dear, so much,
> Loved I not honour more!'

What Lovelace sang of, Spencer, Lord Sunderland, did."

[After this he led us, by what path I forget, to charity, and its administration.—Ed.]

. . . "To think we should have come to this—that a Sister, writing to the papers, complains of 'the loveless charity' of workhouses! That should be a contradiction in terms. It was a pretty letter—but there may be a seamy side. I saw a workhouse at Colchester, where every one seemed to be perfectly happy. The only things they wanted were soft woollen balls for the children: I sent them those. But they were the roc's egg—there was nothing else left to wish for. . . .

κόρος, *fulness of bread*, brings on ὕβρις, *insolence*, which brings on ἄτη, *infatuation*, or *ruin*. All three degrees were summed up in Napoleon. It was his ὕβρις which broke the heart of Louisa of Prussia, and made him shoot the bookseller. Campbell, at a great dinner, gave out the toast *Napoleon* to his literary brothers. Great satisfaction. 'Gentlemen, he was our best friend, he shot a publisher.' Loud applause. The Russian campaign was ἄτη. . . .

It is one of the most curious things in language that our *Bravo!* should come direct from βραβεῖον, *a prize in the games*; the word is found in the New Testament. Another curious thing: Franz Thimm, the bookseller, derives his name, not from the German (where *th* is rare) but from the Greek θυμός which, he says, means *power*.

Putting one thing and another together, I think it likely that I know as much Greek as Franz Thimm, but I didn't dispute the point with him. He says the word is on Greek coins, which have been found along the Baltic and are now in the British Museum; the Greeks went up there for amber. He has a contempt for French and English, which is edifying. . . .

The beginning of the State is the family. Insurrection is justified when the State begins to trample on it, so I side with Antigone. As a young man, I used to side with her altogether; now I see there's something to be said for Kreon. I once suggested as a motto *Hominum opus pulcherrimum civitas*—Κάλλιστόν ἐστιν ἔργον ἀνθρώπων πόλις. I was flattered by Herbert Paul, who said—'I always thought that was Cicero.' . . .

What an awful state of things in Matabeleland, South Africa! There the tyrant sits at home, making rain and working magic. When he goes out to receive his people, if he sees any one whom he suspects of witchcraft, he hurls his asseghai at him, and the others just take up the body and bury it. He has a sort of Janissary guard called Impis, recruited from the children of hostile tribes, when he has killed their fathers and taken captive their mothers. I hope we shall punch his head some day.

In the chorus on Man, Sophocles inverts the order, and the hunter comes before the agriculturist. No matter! He was not bound to give a history of the human race. There is an excellent sketch of such a history in Scott's *Tales of a Grandfather*, written for the cripple boy, poor little Lockhart, who never lived to profit by it. It is taken from Adam Smith, who is seldom read now. Curious that one should owe to Scott one's first glimpse into these things! He had that rare

gift of explaining his own knowledge to others. Thousands of people have knowledge, but cannot communicate it. I was delighted—so was Herbert Paul—with a quotation at the end of a light article on Novels, in *The Century*: 'Ulysses is gone away, and he will never come back again.' Scott was just like the Wanderer whose wonderful stories kept the people of Ithaca sitting up all night.

It is difficult to give the whole force of man in his manhood and valour. . . .

Honey, wine, and milk formed the triple libation. Electra cut off her hair as well. Some years ago it was discovered that there was actually a pipe from the house into the grave, and that offerings were poured down it.

Their great idea was to keep up the sacrifices. Of course, Sophocles and Euripides took cognisance of this, as Matthew Arnold takes cognisance of the Church of England. It was part of the normal state of things; but Euripides, at any rate, did not believe in it. Aristophanes attacked him for undermining faith. The three libations are still customary.

We hear of bowls *headed* or *crowned* with wine; but I'm afraid the Greeks were not acquainted with anything so good as champagne or pale ale.

Horace, when he's going out for a lark, says, 'I'm going to revel like the Edonians.' They were the first to enjoy the grape. They liked getting drunk.

Stringed instruments were holy, wind instruments rowdy.

The Greeks got their food from Thrace. They couldn't live without it, any more than we could live without America. Agricultural countries are seldom or never extirpated. The Greeks pounced on certain spots (By-

zantium, for instance) and occupied them, just as we occupy Sierra Leone; the Genoese went all over those regions afterwards. It would be a great country, if it were not for the stupid Turks. Turks had not been heard of in the days of Alfred. They are Mongols. We know them first in Turkestan. They dared not cross the Hellespont; they were kept back like witches, hundreds of years, by the running water. They didn't take Constantinople till after the founding of Eton. . . .

It is assumed that, if the body remain unburied, the dogs will eat it. Very little about tame dogs in Greek —nothing in the Bible. The dogs in Constantinople ate a sailor who fell down drunk in the streets one night. Everybody is obliged by law to take a lantern to protect himself against them.

Traitorous gains. Money-making is the most innocent of occupations. Most unfairly, κέρδος, gain, the most creditable thing in the world, comes to mean in the plural *gainful processes*, and hence *cheating*. . . .

They say Plato spent a long time over the first ten words of *The Republic*.

l. 523, *οὗτοι συνέχθειν, ἀλλὰ συμφιλεῖν ἔφυν*. Myers translates it,

> 'Love, and not hatred, I was born to share.'

I never could do it so well as that.

ll. 354, 5, *καὶ φθέγμα καὶ ἀνεμόεν φρόνημα καὶ ἀστυνόμους ὀργάς*. *Uttered sounds*—flakes of thought—'strains that sway the town,' I rendered it in my translation. It is a *crescendo*; utterance—soaring thought—power of expression for others. Tennyson would be the very man to put it into victorious English. *Tempered strains;* I delight in the word *temper*. It is a great blessing to

the British, that healthy power of being angry in season. Goschen has it. Few Frenchmen have.

I am not an Englishman before the days of Elizabeth. I'm a Frenchman or a Scot. I don't care about the battle of Agincourt except in Shakespeare. The making of Shakespeare's mind was like the making of the world. . . .

Hallam says there was no interesting literature between Plutarch and Héloise. . . .

Enter Antigone. *Here is the very girl*—HER *we caught.* That's touching. How terrible is the pathos of Esméralda in *Notre Dame de Paris*! I cannot read it in some moods. If they go on much further, we shall tear ourselves to bits with grief. I can't bear to read about Humphrey in *Misunderstood*. . . .

[Here the bird in the window sang so loud that he had to be taken down. Mr. Cory could not see well, frightened him rather, and was full of pity for him, in the midst of all the grammar. 'Poor *little* fellow—but did you ever see a Future Optative before?'] . . .

June 8.

[We did not get through as much as usual, because we went for an hour and a half's walk instead. Saw the Pond—the West Heath—Amy Laud (so called from an affectionate descent of one of Andrew's lady schoolfellows upon him), Alice Heath (after pretty Alice P——)—Hawthornden, in honour of the poets—Walter's Lawn—Constable's tree—Wild Wood (where Chatham was confined)—Spaniard's Road—Jack Straw's Castle, abode of a Mr. and Mrs. Wilson, socialists, pantisocratists, who lived without any servants—the part where Richardson lived

—Keats' Walk (he fought a butcher boy and conquered him)—houses of people who made their money by soap, blue, stationery—a Church (Evangelical). 'The Gospel, as they understand it, forbids them to have good music, so we go elsewhere. They've built a good place for entertainments, which shows that there is still public spirit left.' . . .]

At one point there was talk of invasion.

Here I flood the Russians at Harper's Ferry. That's a secret that has been told me. The people at the Staff College know it. Here, I tell the natives of Hampstead, we must make a last stand.

[We spoke about his life in College at Eton. 'No meat —mutton, at least—for three months. We used to fire batteries. I was sent to get ammunition, being looked upon as the steady man who had cash; I could not have been of much use in any other way. We killed a frog once.'

He laughed very much, when he found that M—— had stolen a bit of broom, in spite of all his warnings about the penalty of forty shillings; but said he wouldn't tell. Only just caught our train. I had no tea, because he was talking about heraldic lilies, and forgot to pour it out till too late. . . . The American War came on at tea-time.]

"We behaved as badly as possible—rejoiced in the dissension—helped the South whenever we could. One of my pupils remonstrated with me after I had paid my subscription to the Society for the Emancipation of Slaves—said it was the first time in his life that he had felt ashamed of me. At first the South had it all her own way. Then, when I was travelling in Scotland, a man came up to me and said, 'Vicksburg is taken. I'm

so glad.' We were as pleased to see each other as two Englishmen meeting in a strange country. Grant and Lee came together when it was all over—Lee beautifully got up—Grant poor and shabby; but instead of going at once to business, they sat down and began talking about the old days when they had both served together in Mexico.

It was one of Gladstone's good deeds, that he wiped out the memory of our wickedness by settling the Alabama Question, and paying the three millions. He examined me for the Newcastle; beautiful eye—sweet voice—modest manner—asked me what *sacra fero* meant —seemed pleased when I answered right. Yet, even a few years later, he began to show signs of the cloven hoof. I was in the House one night when his young Secretary, Stafford Northcote, made a cold, timid, careful speech on Education. It was the first speech of his that made any mark. . . . It would have been kind in Gladstone, who spoke directly afterwards, to take some little notice of it; but he never made the slightest allusion. I heard that Stafford Northcote was deeply disappointed.

I have parted with every book I ever had from Gladstone. One I sold to go down to Devonshire to vote against him. The bookseller said he had given too much —he couldn't get as much as thirty shillings for it again —but when I told him what use I had put the money to, he said it was all right and he didn't mind.

June 15.

[The conversation turned on a poem of Swinburne's and an article on Newnham in *The Nineteenth Century*.]

"I've read Swinburne's *Jubilee Ode* three times. Too

long—but the passage about the sea is beautiful. In the chorus on the power of Love

> *νικᾷ δ' ἐναργὴς βλεφάρων ἵμερος εὐλέκτρου*
> *νύμφας, τῶν μεγάλων πάρεδρος ἐν ἀρχαῖς*
> *θεσμῶν· ἄμαχος γὰρ ἐμπαίζει θεὸς Ἀφροδίτα.*
> *νῦν δ' ἤδη 'γὼ καυτὸς θεσμῶν*
> *ἔξω φέρομαι τάδ' ὁρῶν . . .*

it's very interesting that Sophocles should pass away from the luxury of a bit of Swinburne to that solid analogy.

'When to the sessions of sweet, silent thought' shows that Shakespeare was brought up as a lawyer—but then it's a stroke of genius."

June 29.

[This was just after the Jubilee. On the day Mr. Cory had stayed at home and read *Beauchamp's Career*. —Ed.]

"George Meredith is the greatest genius we have, next to Tennyson.

[He meant to escort Andrew to the Naval Review. . . . He wrote us out a long list of the lives of different Naval commanders, and searched the house for ever so long for a copy of *Peter Simple* for me to take home and read.]

"Your education has been neglected. You ought to have read it long ago. I lived on Parry as a boy."

[M—— went home with *The Life of Commodore Good-enough*.

Odd tasks were recommended from time to time.]

"If you wish for celebrity, you had better re-edit the *στρωματεῖς* of Clement of Alexandria."

[Another day it was the Life of Ulrich von Hutten.]

"If I were a girl, I wouldn't marry any one who was not

a volunteer—unless he were prevented by shortness of sight, or something of that kind. It's the only thing that saves us from conscription."

November 17 1887—1888

PHILOCTETES

The Authorised Version goes on translating γάρ, *for*, till it becomes perfectly nauseous. In the case of the Epistle to the Romans, it makes the argument hopelessly confusing. I recommend total abstinence.

[γάρ, *for*, was indeed as a red rag to a bull, when we were having our lesson. So was ἀλλά, *but*; ἀλλά, was not *but*—it was *No!* it was *Do!*—it was a gesture —it was a shake of the head.[1] καί was *So.* καλῶς λέγεις was *Very good! parfaitement* in 'waiter and chambermaid French.']

. . . "The Imperfect gives itself no airs, but humbly follows the Present. For the root, look to the second or Strong Aorist. There's a wonderful bit of cursing with an Optative in *Ajax*. There was an old scholar, George Kennedy. A friend Faber, a very poetical man, who afterwards turned R.C., came into the room once, and, to his surprise and joy, found him reading the New Testament, which was unusual. But all the old fellow said was, 'Rum fellow, Luke! uses ἄν with the Future Optative!'

[Here a verbal disquisition brought him to the Parable of the Unjust Steward.—Ed.]

"The story is ironical. I cannot understand it otherwise. The unjust steward had feathered his nest, and

[1] A Greek could do nothing without gesticulation.

went to live comfortably with the farmers. It's the lowest form of Christianity. . . .

All Presents have an inceptive power. *I teach you* means *I try to teach you.* 'The half of my goods I give to the poor'—*I give* means *I will give.* That's the most curious discovery I ever made.

. . . In some parts of England *whereby* is used for *whereas.*

'I know nothing *by* myself is *against myself.*'

. . . One is tempted to use the Psalms to bring out the strength of the Greek chorus. I wish I knew the Penitential Psalms by heart. I shouldn't be at a loss for language. . . .

The Homeric *αἰδεῖσθ' ἀλλήλους* is the very principle of military cohesion.

I used to think that Philoctetes, clearing away the weeds before the shrine, might be an allegory—that he was a reformer—but I have quite given that up. Neoptolemus leaves us in doubt as to his crime, and I believe Sophocles thought it more artistic. Some one told the head of your family there was no moral in *The Ancient Mariner*, and he said there was too much: it should have been like one of *The Arabian Nights.* Great things do happen from hidden causes. Virgil tells of people who came from a town founded by Philoctetes."

[I said I did not like the tone of Neoptolemus, when he said that 'men must bear the lot given them by the gods,' and it was 'not right that anybody should forgive or pity those who, like Philoctetes, had voluntarily incurred misfortune.']

I think Sophocles means you to feel, at this point, that Neoptolemus is becoming an authority: he shows the development of the character. I must say I like books

which set young men above old. They are so much better. Goodness begins to decline after 25—cleverness after 30; at 40 or 50 the clouds of vanity gather. It came to me while I was reading—I suggest it with diffidence—that Neoptolemus is like Bedivere.

Thersites is a mixture of the snob, the bore, and the cad. Ulysses was more sure than the other man, Diomed, that he would get the bow of Philoctetes. They are like Paul and Barnabas; one was the speaker, one the active man. I don't suppose Barnabas talked much—he looked majestic.

l. 1420, *ἀθάνατον ἀρετὴν ἔσχον, ὡς πάρεσθ' ὁρᾶν.*

'*I won immortal virtue, as you may see*, says Hercules, much finer than glory. It makes one think he was transfigured. His poor body had been spoilt when he entered Heaven. Hebe came with the Amrita cup of immortality.

l. 503, *παθεῖν μὲν εὖ, παθεῖν δὲ θάτερα.*

θάτερα, the other things, is a euphemism for *κακά, evil things*—as my friend Herbert said, when he wrote home, a little before his death, 'If you don't send the money, they will do *the other thing*,' meaning of course that the brigands, who had taken him prisoner, would kill him. There were three friends. The fourth was a good fellow too — a foreigner, I think. When the brigands settled to let one of them go, to arrange about ransom, knowing of course that he would never come back again, the lot fell to Vyner; but he made Lord Muncaster go in his place, because he was a married man. He died in his stead. They have a memorial of him at Oxford. 'To the dear memory of Reginald Vyner,' it begins. No man was more devoted to me than Herbert.

[Of the difficult passage 836–838 every one 'had a dream, had an interpretation,' and each of us was very much pleased with her own. Mr. Cory heard us out, and then said quietly, 'I hope you're all contented. I give it up. . . .'

We talked about words such as μολὼν put in only to fill up the line. I said there was a good deal of that sort of thing in Tennyson's *Harold.*]

"There may be. I should be very proud, if I had written *Harold.* There's a great deal too much of it in Shakespeare; he says everything. *Le secret d'ennuyer, c'est tout dire.* Sophocles beats him in self-restraint; that's his εἰρωνεία. But Shakespeare wrote for the stage, and you have to sacrifice a good deal to explain everything to an audience. I approve of *Henry IV.*—not of *Lear.* Lear's such a fool in the beginning, I can't take any interest in him. I delight in the audience at a French play in London. De Musset's *Caprice* and his *Caprices de Marianne* are wonderful; Herbert Paul agrees with me. The fellow who acted Fritz in *La Grande Duchesse* made me cry. I suppose I was the only person in the house who did."

His last words to M——were these:

['Tell your father my English is getting better since I gave up associating only with the brutal sex, and took to ladies.']

[After a later lesson.—Ed.] . . .

[He had been unhappy about politics.]

Ichabod is written on my front. If they carry Home Rule, I shall go and live at Zurich." . . .

[Sometimes we discussed the novel of the day.]

"Plato should have written novels like George Eliot's. I am delighted with *Beggars All.* I think it better,

for a first work, than the *Scenes of Clerical Life*. The writer is not an English girl; I found that out for myself.

[In a fit of enthusiasm for Tolstoy, we presented Mr. Cory with *La Guerre et la Paix*, but he was not enthusiastic—except about the story of the peasant and his little dog. André, he said, is a stately person.]

. . . "I am myself a Dumasser of the first class. Have you ever read *Ascanio*? I propose to found a Dumas Society for printing thirty of his best works properly, without pages left out and wrong spelling. I cannot read *Les deux Diane*. Now and then he is horribly bloodthirsty; there's one unforgivable passage. I cannot understand Stevenson's preference for *Bragelonne*. If ever we meet, I should like to have it out with him. Poor dear fellow! he knows no Greek. How I should like to teach him!—I recommend the Henry IV. series. Henry IV. is like David—plenty of faults, but you can't help loving them. You see that every one that came near them did. Dumas' *Memoirs* are wonderful stuff."

'I should like to read them.'

["There's no reason you should."]

[Some one spoke of the glorious sunsets there were a few years ago.]

Thirty-seven thousand people destroyed! Rather a high price to pay for a firework. It's a nightmare to think that some day the earth will be too full for the number of people on it. . . .

The first poets I cared about were Campbell (*not* Scott)—Byron—Euripides."

[It grieved us that he cared not at all about Browning, though—without knowing the author—he had copied into his manuscript book—

'Oh, the little more, and how much it is,
And the little less, and what worlds away!'[1]

For Swinburne's *Bothwell* he professed great admiration.]

"*The King's Tragedy*, *The White Ship*, are natural and wholesome. My audacious friend, Furnivall, took me to see him in '59. Rossetti was in his prime then. . . . That's a very sad Sonnet in Christina's last volume; I suppose she alludes to him."

[He was very much astonished to find that I had never read the *Vita Nuova*. Even more astonished was Mr. Cory to find that I had never read Bacon's *Wisdom of the Ancients*. But this was nothing to his bewilderment when I told him that I knew nothing whatever about the battle of Fontenoy. He could not speak for some minutes; then he said:

'It was a great shock to me—your saying that.']

Nov. 28, 1889.

It was freezing cold at Hampstead—a wind that pierced like daggers; but, though it took my breath away, so that once or twice I could hardly get on up the hill, the pain in my hands called up such a keen, live spirit of resistance, that I almost enjoyed it. Mr. Cory made me sit in an arm-chair on one side of the fire—he sat in an arm-chair on the other—and we read *The Cyclops in Love*. The lilies and poppies were all the lovelier for the snow on the ground. We talked about *Evelina*.

'Rather milk and water morality, isn't it? My grandmother liked it—but there I think my grandmother was hopelessly mistaken. She was young when it came out;

[1] This particular verse seems to be a favourite with the classically minded. I have heard Tennyson quote it—and Mr. Bridges.

that makes all the difference. . . . I love Cowper . . . I was brought up on him; my mother used to make me learn him by heart . . . My mother and my grandmother loved him. I never heard of Milton. I read all the Edinburghs and Quarterlies through.'

Dec. 5.

I went into the sitting-room to warm myself at once this morning. . . .

He told me curious things about the books they liked in the Middle Ages.

'They liked their history and theology at second hand —in a portable shape—in sandwiches, so to speak. They didn't read Livy; they read Valerius Maximus. Bradshaw told me, he had never seen the catalogue of a Mediaeval Library that had not got Valerius Maximus in it.'

Dec. 6.

I translated ἔαρ ὁρῶσα Νυχεία, Nucheia *looking at the Spring.*

'*No!* it means *with the spring in her eyes.* It 's the most beautiful thing you can say of any one. I very seldom see eyes. I did last night. I saw Spring in the eyes of my wife—the eldest of my four daughters, as she is generally supposed to be![1] We went to a penny concert.'

March 14, 1890.

I had not gone to Hampstead for some time, and on the last occasion we had fought, because I prefer Shelley to Keats.

'An ounce of Coleridge is worth a pound of Shelley. Keats haunts one.'

[1] The three Miss Grahams were there.

'Shelley haunts me,' I said.

'What haunts you?'

I mentioned something on the spur of the moment—I forget what.

'Oh, the short things?'

'No,' I said boldly, 'bits of Prometheus haunt me too—

"My soul is an enchanted boat"

for instance.'

'The Shelley Society have asked me to write a paper on Shelley's scholarship. I shall expose their idol. I am like Balaam the other way round; they call me in to bless, and I shall curse. People should read Johnson's lives of the Poets; that's the antidote for a love of Shelley.'

When I went back yesterday, he told me that he had finished his paper, and had given it to Mr. Furnivall, the night before. Mr. Furnivall said it was more sympathetic than he expected, and asked leave to send it to a lady at Merān (as I understood) who edits a magazine and is always asking him for copy.

'She doesn't pay of course. I told him, if he wanted it for a London magazine, I should have to dress it up a little. I took great pains with it. Shelley was not a scholar at all. He was a schoolboy broken off. He shows it by his choice of the *Symposium*, which is easy—for Plato—and then he makes a mistake a schoolboy would not have made about the meaning of πότε. He picks up things here and there. 'Weave the song' was an expression he got from the use of ὑφαίνω. Out of deference to you I looked out

My soul is an enchanted boat.

'Do you remember the second line?'

'No.'

My soul is an enchanted *boat*,
Which, *like a sleeping swan.*

'I can't stand a thing like that.'

June 5.

'Was that you wiping your shoes?' said Mr. Cory. 'Very virtuous of you! I thought it was an attack on the house.'

He laughed merrily when he found that I had brought him a Hermes, sent by Mrs. Wayte, and a box of ginger.

'Hm! there's some intellect in that face. Looks as if he were going to beat the child. Very much obliged for the ginger; it will be acceptable when Andrew comes home. My mother used to eat ginger in church.'

Sept. 17.

The Sage sent me a message: 'Tell Miss Coleridge that I've been reading *Dante*, and that I think he's a cobbler beside Virgil.'

I felt sorry when he moved from Canon Place to the little house in Pilgrim Lane. The drawing-room, though very pretty, was darker. We were not so gay as we were up on the hill. I missed the familiar pictures on their own walls—the little maid going to bathe for the first time and hesitating, half frightened, half resolute, on the steps of the machine—Iris—Mary of Orange as a child—Diana—the water colour of a girl, her hat thrown off, sitting pensively before an organ.

May 26, 1892.

A post-card came: 'I am too ill for "The Birds." Bad Job.'

Last week we were reading with him as usual, and hurried off to catch the train. I wish now we had missed it. He promised to show me some great passage in Thierry (I think it was). I thought I would remind him of it next time.

June 1.

I saw him for the last time. He spoke to me about his own people.

'My father was ten years older than my mother. He let her fall out of his arms when she was a baby. Picking her up, he said, 'Never mind, darling! I'll marry you some day.' And he kept his word, returning to her after ten years of India. In the meantime she had been wooed by a lover who used to ride over to present her with the quartos of Scott's poems, as they came out.'

He was deeply interested in a new *History of Persia*, and in Cadwallader Bates' *History of Northumberland*, and made Mrs. Cory show them both to me. His face was altered. He looked ill.

'He is much better to-day,' Mrs. Cory said, when I went in.

'No,' he said quickly, 'I don't expect to be much better.'

He died at 1 a.m. on the 12th June.

MARY COLERIDGE

The hour had come; you could no longer stay,
Swiftest and brightest Spirit of our day!
E'en now we saw and touched thee; vanished quite,
A cloud received thee, hidden from our sight.

Here, in this garden, you were oft-times seen,
These forest paths, and in these meadows green;
You loved the beauty of our cheerful Kent,
Yet the grey North land gave your soul content.
That dim, pathetic, soft-illumined sky,
The sun vague-gleaming through uncertainty,
No tone too definite, no outline clear,
All symbolised your spirit-atmosphere;
And none, like you, with magical command,
Evoked the Genius of Northumberland,
Save one keen poet, 'into buoyant order
Reining his rhymes,' along the northern border.

The London streets, their colour and their throng,
Did to the mirror of your mind belong,
And there you learnt, as in no other place,
The woes, joys, passions, of your suffering race,
And to your poorer sisters gave a part
Of your wide knowledge and your generous heart.

Light was your touch upon the shadowy earth;
You loved it well, yet knew it little worth;
Each mood you loved that changing nature brings,
And yet, and yet—you loved diviner things.

Many there be who may not live again,
Because they lose their souls and live in vain;
But those earn life more rich than that of men
Who their one talent multiply to ten;
And, if the Christian teaching we receive,
We 'll you in fair companionship believe,
Where radiant Angels, strong, and clear, and free,
As their fit compeer gladly welcome thee;
Those brighter saints, who, by the finest change,
Transmuted passion to a nobler range,
In whom, on earth, ripened the heavenly seed,
Because, contemplative, they loved indeed,
And, above all, the Mary, who adored
That wondrous guest, her brother's friend, the Lord;
Heart near akin to thine, she chose to give
Her very life, not only means to live.

True as the steel that to the magnet flies,
Tender as sunset light in August skies,
Fine as the edge of a Damascus blade,
Strong as a man, and gentle as a maid,
So was your verse, and, Mary, so were you.
Farewell, dear Spirit, tender, strong, and true!
If, in a lovelier world, we meet again,
Joyful will be the awaking out of pain.

BERNARD HOLLAND.

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